

# THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN NATURAL DISASTER OPERATIONS

Disaster Research Center  
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THE POLICE DEPARTMENT IN NATURAL DISASTER OPERATIONS

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with

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Abstract

The report describes the involvement of the police department in natural disaster operations. The organization of such departments in terms of time, function, and authority is initially discussed as are the implications of these variables for the department's involvement in disaster tasks. Several different forms of organizational adaptation to disaster demands are indicated: assigning priority to demands, reallocating personnel internally, redeploying and recalling field personnel, and reducing and delaying normal tasks. The consequences of these adaptations for the authority structure, the decision-making process, and channels of communication are discussed. The relationship of the police to other organizations in emergency action is also elaborated.

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No. 6

THE POLICE DEPARTMENT  
IN NATURAL DISASTER OPERATIONS

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## FOREWORD

This document is one of a series of publications prepared by the staff of the Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University. This aspect of the work of the Center has been sponsored by the Office of Civil Defense under Contract OCD-PS-64-46, Work Unit 2651-A. Below is a listing of the materials which have been included in the monograph and the report series.

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The Warning Process in Natural Disaster Situations

The Local Civil Defense in Natural Disaster: From Office to Organization

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## CHAPTER I

### MUNICIPAL POLICE ORGANIZATIONS: THEIR FUNCTIONS AND ORGANIZATION

Understanding the operation of the police department in communities which experience disasters is the concern of the following pages. Every year, many American communities mobilize their resources to cope with various kinds of emergencies, some of which are disasters. Each community has a variety of resources which it can bring to bear in these emergency situations. The major component of such resources is the organizations which exist in the community. Such organizations become the functional and operational arms of the community during the emergency period.

Not every organization becomes involved. Those most involved are organizations traditionally concerned with problems relevant to the "whole" community and which possess relevant emergency resources. One of the most important organizations with this community orientation and with emergency resources is the municipal police department. Since police departments are normally concerned with community order, they become involved almost immediately. Because they do have emergency resources, they often become involved in a wide scope of disaster activities. Of course, dealing with "normal" emergencies is a constant work activity of police departments. They, along with fire departments, are usually the first to arrive on the scene and frequently have initial responsibility for disaster operations. In understanding police operations in disaster, they have to be seen in terms of the pre-disaster organization of such departments. Consequently, the remainder of the chapter discusses the "typical" structure of municipal departments.

#### Background

Police departments vary according to the size of the cities they serve and are influenced by local tradition and problems. Such variations, however, result from the size and complexity of departments and not from their basic community relationships or tasks. The "typical" municipal police department is the major concern here. We will not discuss state police, sheriff's departments, or other police groups unless mentioning them clarifies the activities of the municipal police department. The internal structures of police departments are so similar, however, that many of the comments made here will apply to other types of police organizations.

The discussion will be limited to the police department as a functional unit and will exclude possible differences which result from varying political arrangements. Police activity and response in disasters, however, are somewhat independent of variations in the departments' political links to their communities. In chapter five, dealing with interorganizational relationships, certain aspects of the police department's relations with the political structures, particularly those relevant to disasters, will be discussed.

Little descriptive literature exists on actual police operations in a disaster. In addition, there is meager social science literature on general police operations. More material is available, however, in the public administration literature on the "ideal" police operation and on problems of building a "good" police force. Since the exclusive concern here is with police operations in disasters, much of the information available concerning "ideal" police operations has not been included. Most of the material here has been based on interviews and other data collected by the Disaster Research Center field studies and unpublished reports in the Disaster Research Center library. Such materials are most often not directly cited in the text. When published works are used, notation is, of course, made.

#### Functions of Police Departments

It is useful to begin with a consideration of the various functions of police departments in their day-to-day operations. Wilson has stated these functions in the following manner:

In order to accomplish their purposes, the police must control people and their environment in such a manner as to obtain compliance with criminal laws and other regulations. Failing in this objective, they must apprehend offenders so that they may be subjected to treatment intended to diminish the likelihood of future violations by them and by others. Police duties may be classified according to their more immediate objectives as (1) the prevention of the development of criminal and antisocial tendencies in individuals; (2) the repression of the criminal activities of those so inclined; (3) the arrest of criminals, the recovery of stolen property and the preparation of cases for presentation in court; and (4) the regulation of people in their noncriminal activities (as, for example, the regulation of traffic) and the performance of a variety of nonregulatory services.<sup>1</sup>

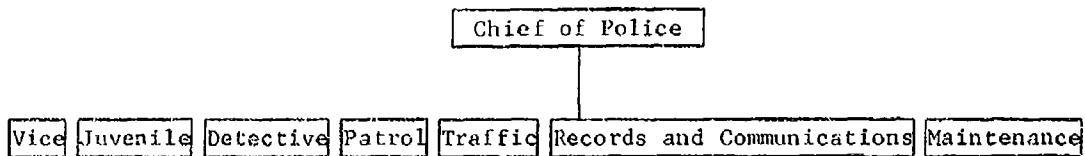
To carry out this mandate, the typical police department of a moderate-sized city develops the units described below. Some of these units, such as the juvenile section, may involve only one or two men if the department is small or an entire division or bureau of several hundred men if the department is larger. The number of separate units for individual functions of the department varies proportionally with the size of the police department and the community.

The functions of a modern police department are usually grouped into three major areas:

1. Line or "operations": patrol, traffic, detective, vice, juvenile.
2. Services: records and communication, laboratory, jail, maintenance.

3. Administration: planning, inspection, budget and accounts, personnel, public relations, intelligence.

Below is an illustration of a department organized on the basis of function.<sup>2</sup>



The responsibilities of the operations units are as follows:

Patrol. -- to repress criminal activity, regulate conduct, and perform a number of services to the public.

Crime Investigation (Detective). -- to apprehend criminals, recover stolen property, gather and prepare evidence for the prosecution of criminals.

Traffic Control. -- to prevent accidents and congestion.

Vice Control. -- to eliminate commercialized vice and safeguard the morals of the community.

Juvenile Crime Control. -- to prevent the development of delinquent tendencies in children and to aid in the correction of such tendencies when they do develop. (Vice and juvenile crime units of more than one person are not usually created in departments of fifty or less personnel.)<sup>3</sup>

These major functions of the "operations" units above are usually supported by the following auxiliary tasks:

Records Tasks. -- to record, classify, index, file, and tabulate facts relating to crime, criminals, and other police matters.

Communications Tasks. -- to receive and transmit police information and orders, using the telephone, Teletype, radio, and other communications devices.

Police Laboratory Duties. -- to identify or establish other facts relating to physical evidence by examining it scientifically.

Jail Duties. -- to provide suitable custodial care of prisoners.

Property Management. -- to care for department-owned property and property temporarily in police custody.

Maintenance. -- to service, repair, and maintain in good order police buildings, other property, such equipment as motor vehicles and communications, and traffic signs, signals, and markings.<sup>4</sup>

The various functions of the police department may also be arranged in a hierarchy of importance. If the responsibility of the heads of line divisions is considered, Wilson suggests the following hierarchy which ranks the degree of responsibility: patrol, detective, traffic, juvenile, vice. There is evidence, however, that the police officers do not necessarily evaluate their "prestige" in the same order. In general, the detective bureau tends to receive great prestige from the internal evaluation of police officers. This is confirmed in several ways. In a study by Preiss and Ehrlich, policemen of the state police organization were asked which department they would most like to enter. Detective bureau was highest with 77.3 percent, next was fire marshall at 9.4 percent, and then safety and traffic bureau.<sup>5</sup> The least desired were the records and traffic sections. Preiss and Ehrlich point out that this can be attributed in part to the fact that the detective bureau is the keystone of the romantic police image. They also point out how unrealistic assignment to the detective bureau is in terms of possible opportunity since this section consists of only ten percent of the force of the department. Although the particular police group studied had broader police powers than most, their primary emphasis and activity was devoted to traffic control. Again, in a survey study of Philadelphia patrolmen, Kephart reported that of those patrolmen preferring other duties, 90 percent chose detective work. The least preferred division was records.<sup>6</sup> In another police department studied by DRC this same desire to be assigned as a detective was present; otherwise, the rank order tended to follow the pattern suggested above. In this department, there was also considerable rivalry between the patrol and traffic divisions. Patrol was felt to be more important and a "real" police function. Traffic patrolmen desired to enter the patrol division but were jealous of it. This manifested itself when traffic patrolmen made such statements as, "They think they Patrol know how to run everything." Records division had the lowest status. One further indication of this ranking was that a captain was in charge of records while other divisions were headed by majors.

#### Organizational Patterns

There are several ways in which the organization of a police department can be viewed. Three different patterns will be considered here. First, a department must be organized around time since the demands made upon it vary in different time periods. Second, a department must be organized around function. Multiple tasks require allocation of personnel. Third, a department must be organized in terms of authority. These three patterns of organization will be discussed separately.

##### Time

Police departments are organized around a twenty-four-hour day. Using one midwestern department as a model, the typical hours are first shift,

11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.; second shift, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; third shift, 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. The nonoperational staff, such as the records division, work from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Certain personnel may work at particular hours because of high demands at certain times. For example, the traffic division works two shifts during the week, 7:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and 3:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.; but on weekends, a third shift is put on, 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., that partially overlaps the afternoon shift thereby augmenting this division during periods of increased demand. The detectives normally work two shifts although the nature of their duties does not adhere to rigidly specified hours. The patrol, traffic, and detective divisions are the only ones with personnel present for more than eight hours.

During the day or second shift, with all commanding officers present, the patrol captain and major occasionally go into the field and often stay past 3:00 p.m. In the patrol division, a lieutenant and a sergeant are present for each shift. The traffic division does not work a third shift, but for the other two shifts a lieutenant and a sergeant are present. The detective division has a field and a desk lieutenant on each of the two shifts it works. Desk sergeants are present twenty-four hours a day.

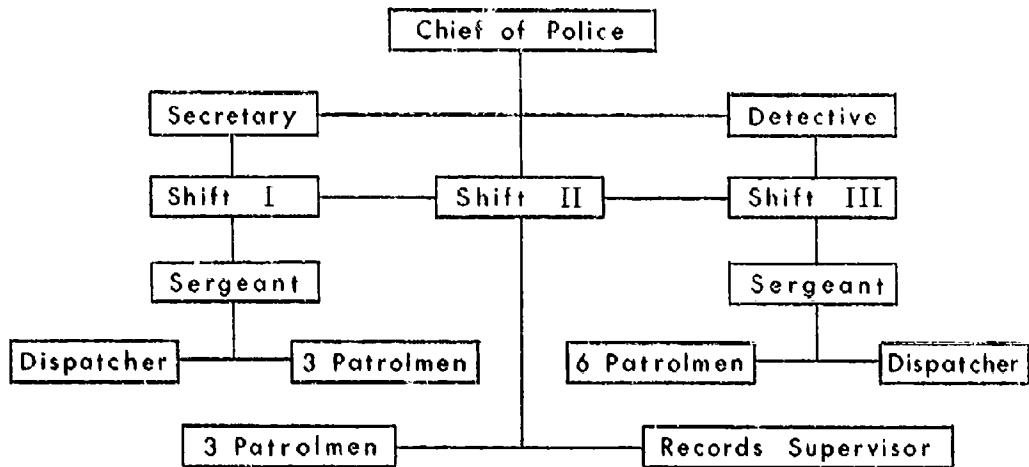
A police department organized on a twenty-four-hour basis gives it certain advantages for coping with demands. Operating around the clock means that the department normally has available more potential manpower than would another organization working only one or two shifts. Many departments have standing orders that, in certain types of emergencies, all personnel will present themselves for assignment. In other instances departments have routine orders to recall the previous shift as well as contacting the next shift to report early. In a short time, a department can have from two to three times the number of personnel it ordinarily uses. These personnel resources are the major means of adapting to the increased demands made by their disaster tasks.

Another effect of time on response of the organization is the time of day that a disaster agent strikes. This affects not only the manpower available at the moment but also the ability and means of mobilizing manpower. For example, if the disaster strikes at 3:00 a.m. the number of communication outlets for recalling personnel is reduced. At this hour, the number of people reporting in spontaneously would be lower than if the emergency had occurred in the early evening hours when radios and televisions are on. Manpower mobilization can be delayed or facilitated due to the number of "effective" communication channels available at different disaster-impact times.

#### Function

As already suggested, functions are the primary basis for organizing the activities of a department. Departments often have their divisions separated along the lines of various functions such as vice control, patrol, traffic, etc. In smaller departments (see fig. 1), all of the functions may be combined in relatively undifferentiated patrol forces. Using figure 1 as a generic example, one can see that a general patrol force handles crime repression and vice control as well as traffic control and investigation, etc. The auxiliary services, such as keeping records, are handled mainly by a records supervisor and a secretary.

FIGURE 1: Organization of a Police Department in a Small Town.



Personnel by rank

Police Matron  
Crossing Guards

- 1 — Chief of Police
- 1 — Detective
- 2 — Sergeants
- 12 — Patrolmen
- 2 — Dispatchers
- 1 — Records Supervisor
- 1 — Secretary

20 — Total

As the size of a department increases, so does the differentiation and specialization of function and, therefore, the number of separate divisions organized along these lines. For example, in figure 2, the investigative functions and the service functions become the basis for separate divisions. At this stage, however, the patrol and traffic functions are not separated into separate divisions but are usually combined in the same division which may variously be called the uniformed division, field division, or patrol division. The traffic and patrol tasks may be assigned to the same officer (car or unit) depending on the time of day. Another similar pattern in departments of this size is to allow certain cars (units) within the division to specialize in traffic problems and investigation. In medium-sized cities or larger, there is generally the differentiation of the patrol and traffic functions into separate divisions (see fig. 3).

As departments get larger, they become more complex within divisions and some other functions, such as youth functions, move to division status; but there is little further differentiation of function. (For example, see fig. 4, the table of organization for one of the larger departments in the United States.)

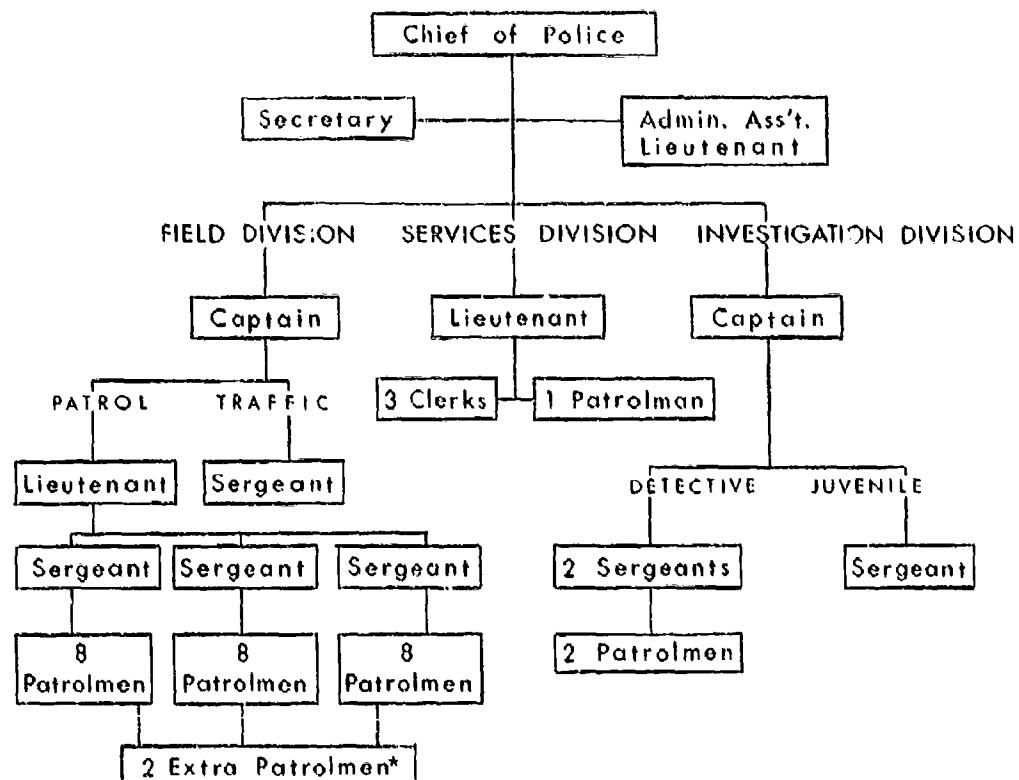
Depending mainly on the size<sup>7</sup> and composition of the city, there is differential allocation of personnel to the various divisions within a department. Patrol divisions are generally the largest in police departments. Compared to departments in medium-sized cities, the percentage of men in patrol in larger departments is much greater relative to other divisions, especially traffic. For example, the Chicago police department has approximately 8,000 men or 61 percent of its over 13,000 personnel in patrol, compared to approximately 1,300 men or 10 percent in traffic.<sup>8</sup> This is largely due to the nature of the main function of the police department -- protecting the life of the inhabitants and combating crime. Compare this proportion to that between patrol and traffic in a medium-sized city in the midwest. The patrol division is still the larger, with 36 percent of the personnel compared to 25 percent in the traffic division, but the difference is much less.

This difference between the large city and the medium-sized city probably indicates differences in the composition of the population. In part, the growth in the size of a community is qualitative as well as quantitative. The large city represents a more heterogeneous population including diverse social classes and groups based on race, nationality, occupation, etc. Thus the opportunity for or probability of conflict is greater and requires a different allocation of personnel. The population of a medium-sized city, and especially the city used for illustration, is more homogeneous without some of the problems of the more diversified populace of a larger city.

#### Authority

The third basis of organization centers on levels of authority. Police departments are traditionally modeled on authority patterns drawn from military organizations. A semimilitary or quasi-military structure is used seemingly under the assumption that:

FIGURE 2: Organization of a Police Department in a Large Town.



Personnel by Rank

- 1 - Chief of Police
- 2 - Captains
- 3 - Lieutenants
- 7 - Sergeants
- 29 - Patrolmen
- 1 - Secretary
- 3 - Clerks

---

46 - Total

\*Vacation relief & Special Assignment

Police Matron  
School Crossing Guards

FIGURE 3: Organization of a Police Department in a Medium Size City.

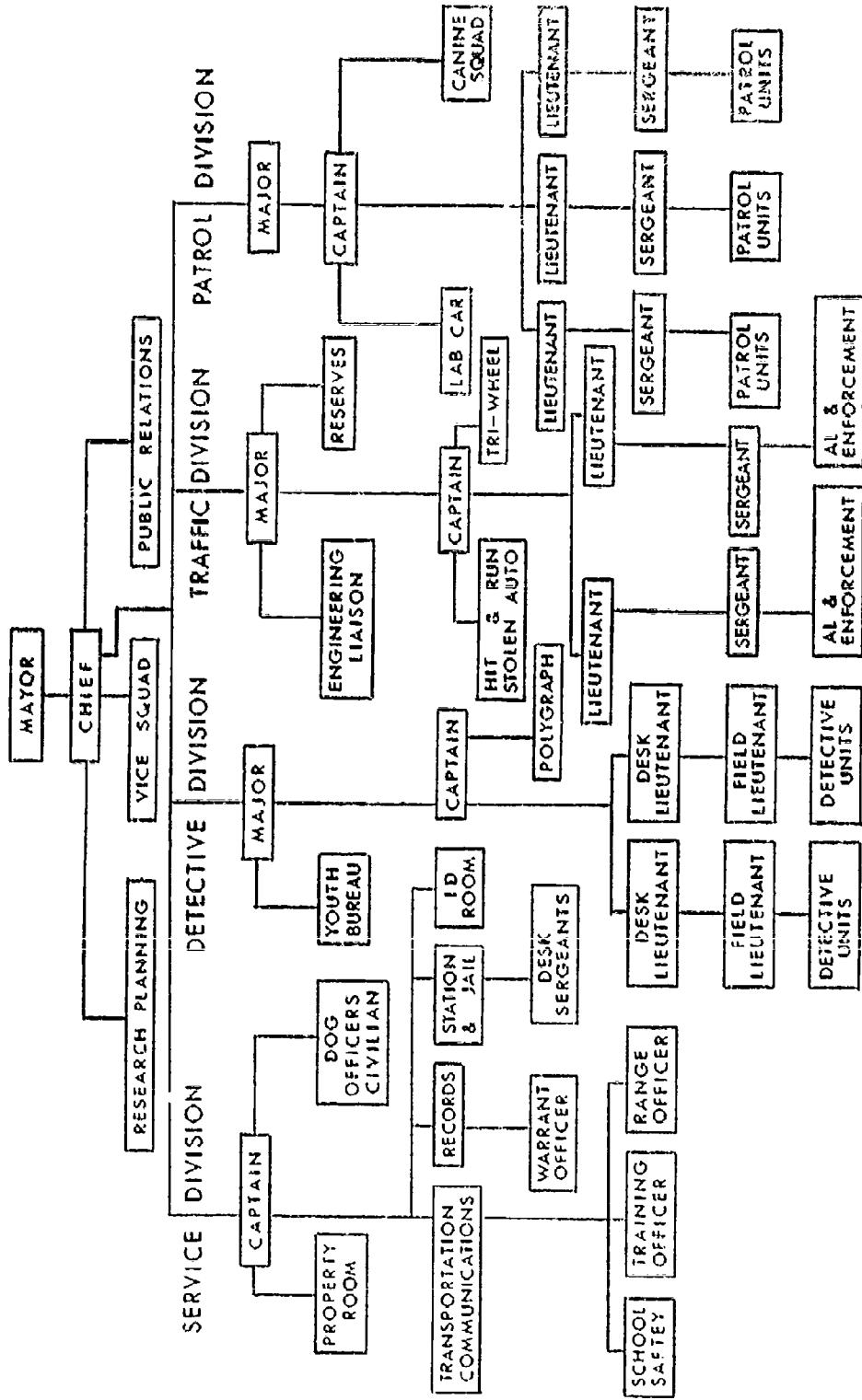
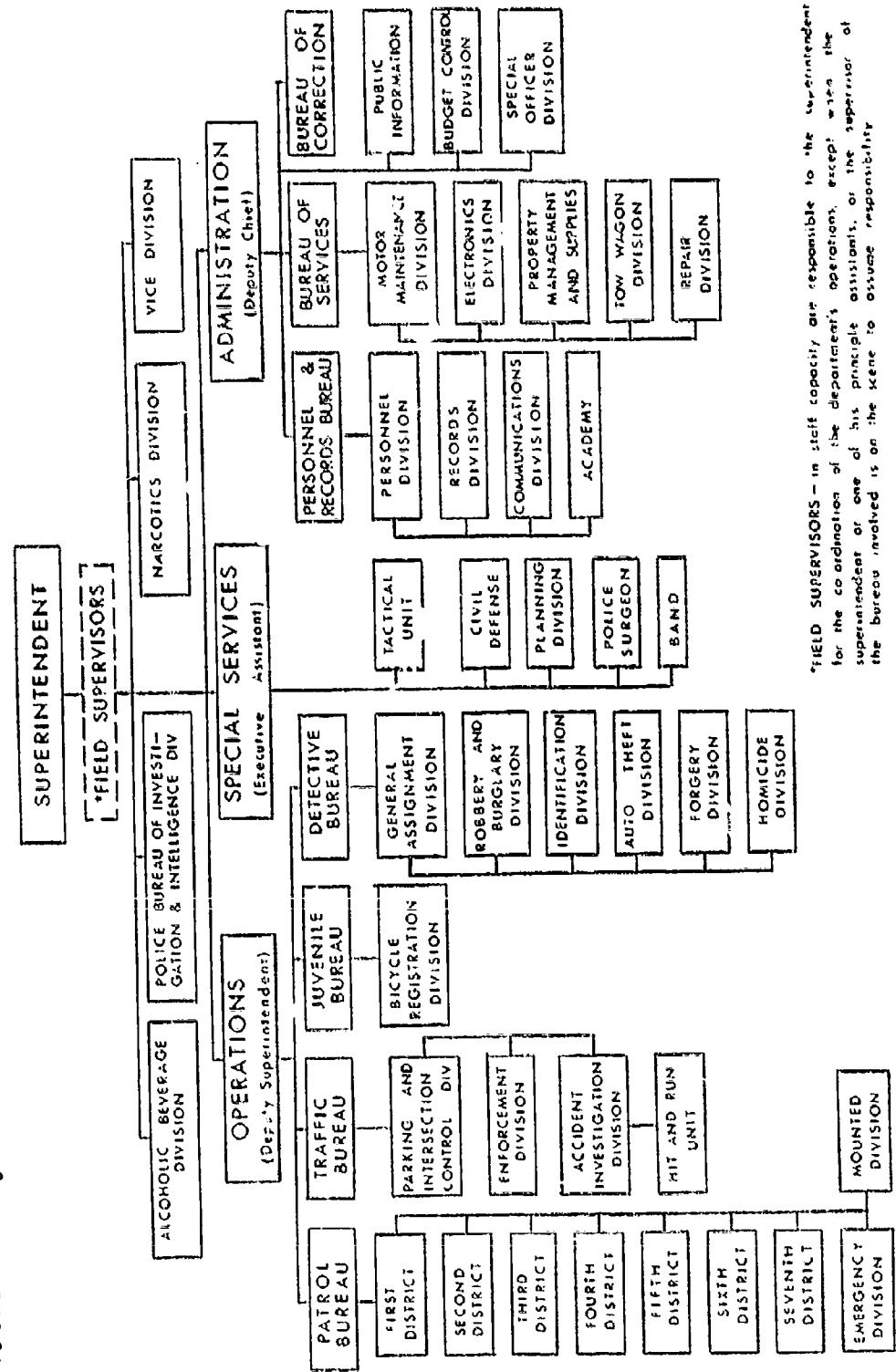


FIGURE 4: Organization of a Police Department in a Large City.



\*FIELD SUPERVISORS\* - in staff capacity are responsible to the Superintendent for the co-ordination of the department's operations, except when the supervisor or one of his principal assistants, or the supervisor of the bureau involved is on the scene to assume responsibility.

in order to cope with the problems of controlling crime and maintaining order, a closely coordinated and disciplined body of personnel with clear-cut lines of authority is necessary.<sup>9</sup>

Given this assumption, military titles are typically used. For example, the following ranks are found in police departments. They are listed here in the order of their authority:

Chief of Police  
Assistant Chiefs  
Major  
Captains  
Lieutenants  
Sergeants  
Detectives  
Patrolmen-Patrolwomen  
Civilian Employees

Such an authority model suggests that decisions are made at the top and transmitted down the line and that the close supervision of personnel is common. McNamara, in his study of the New York police department, found that there appeared to be close supervision.<sup>10</sup> For example, patrolmen on foot patrol were to "ring in" once an hour to the precinct station through a call-box system. They also were supposed to ring in to report when and where they were either beginning or ending a meal or that they were about to relieve themselves. The stated reason for the "ringing in" procedure was so patrolmen could be directed to locations where police attention was needed, but the procedure became a matter of form and many officers did not ring in at the appropriate times. Usually there was no punishment for not ringing in but occasionally an officer would be charged with this violation. Patrolmen saw this as an arbitrary use of supervisory power and saw the rule as "irrelevant or dysfunctional for the purposes of law enforcement."<sup>11</sup> This department also used negative sanctions for patrolmen found guilty of violating the expectations of their supervisors. Negative sanctions involved such penalties as being fined, having vacation time reduced, being demoted, or being dropped from the department.

McNamara suggests the language of close supervision and negative sanctions, often used by police departments, creates anxiety and ambivalence in patrolmen because they "often had to handle difficult situations without the assistance of supervisors in the early and often the most critical phases."<sup>12</sup> He further delineates a deficiency of this semimilitary supervisory system:

This evaluation of the supervisory system has pointed up the need for development of a feeling of discretionary power, for well-developed skills, and for a strong self-directedness on the part of patrolmen assigned to the field units. We can argue that the anxiety shared by many patrolmen about disciplinary action and the supervisors' attempt to maintain an appearance of close supervision are inappropriate for the development and maintenance of the needed autonomy on the part of the patrolman. The semimilitary model,

while attempting to generate confidence in the ability of the department to cope with the uncertainties of the police task, generates another set of uncertainties that are strongly experienced by the members of the field units.<sup>13</sup>

Since the semimilitary supervisory system is often held up as an ideal, it can create anxiety. In actual operation, however, three factors seem to undercut its rigidity. First, in some departments there is a conscious attempt to give lower echelon personnel a degree of autonomy. Second, the nature of most police work, particularly patrol activities, militates against close personnel supervision. Third, the crucial nature of communication in modern police departments tends to undercut traditional lines of authority. Each of these factors will be discussed briefly.

1. Encouragement of Individual Autonomy and Initiative. Greater autonomy and self-directedness than the image of the military model suggests is often found in some departments. In one smaller city department DRC studied, great emphasis was placed, among both higher ranks and patrolmen, on the desirability of members being able to use their own judgment. Perhaps because of the size of the department and the general ethos of the region, there was little feeling among patrolmen that rules were stifling them. Ranking officers often mentioned that if they went into the field they would let the units know so the units would not feel they were being spied on. By contrast, in the department McNamara studied, captains would often patrol in civilian clothes and sometimes they were not known by the patrolmen of a certain precinct. This created a feeling among the patrolmen of constantly being under surveillance and a fear that some minor violation of rules would become the basis of a complaint by the supervisor.<sup>14</sup>

In general, there was also a great degree of consultation and informality between ranks in the departments DRC studied. In one department, meetings of higher ranking officers took place periodically to review operations, plans, and problems. Also, top officers (majors and alternately majors and captains) from the different divisions held a meeting with the chief once or twice a week. The chief also held meetings with division heads plus certain specialists out of each division (such as the officer in charge of planning and the public relations officer) once a month. Occasionally he would meet individually with the head of a unit or division. The chief in this department felt that policemen should be able to work on their own. His job and the job of his commanders in relation to patrolmen was to guide and to correct. They were to make sure the men were performing their duties within proper limits, but, at the same time, they placed a high value on an officer knowing how to use his own judgment and how to act on his own.

2. Structure of Police Activities. The implementation of the semimilitary model of authority and decision making is made difficult by the nature of most police activities. Reiss and Bordua suggest that:

In many ways, policing is a highly decentralized operation involving the deployment of large numbers of men alone or in small units where control by actual command -- that is, by issuing orders -- is difficult.<sup>15</sup>

Regardless of the appearance of a hierarchical decision-making system, in the everyday operations of basic police work, field patrol, and traffic duties as well as investigation activities, the patrolman makes most of the decisions on his own. He has the general orientation and regulations of the department to provide his frame of reference. Decisions are referred to superiors only when some special problem arises and perhaps not even then. If discussion is required for a patrolman to make a decision, he may simply go to another patrolman with greater experience. If on a two-man team, he may discuss the problem with his partner. He may bring it to his sergeant on routine field contact or at the end of a shift. In one department studied, it was rare for anything other than a personal problem or an unusual situation which might have repercussions outside the police department to get past the sergeant. When the patrolman's reports are filed, he may get comments from higher officers, through his sergeants, on his handling of the situation. These comments then provide him with a future basis of experience. If some difficulty or possibly a specially suggested project is posed, only then would the patrolman talk to a captain or major or even the lieutenant. In one smaller department studied, there was even more informality with the major or captain. They would occasionally check on a man in the field or ask if he had any problems. The orders a patrolman receives from higher officers are routine ones concerning matters of policy and procedure. In matters of daily basic police work, the patrolmen, sometimes in conjunction with his peers, is the primary decision maker in large part because he is isolated most of the time from his "superiors."

3. Crucial Nature of Communication. A rigid hierarchical model of authority is also undercut by the critical role that communications has come to play in the operations of modern police departments. There is the possibility that greater centralized control could be achieved by the centralization of communications now common in most departments. While this is a possibility, it does not seem to be the case in actual operations. In effect, a centralized system allows persons in communications headquarters some discretion in making assignments and in offering advice. Persons assigned to the communications headquarters are usually not high in the authority structure of the department. In particular, the role of the dispatcher seems to be critical.

The dispatcher takes complaint calls and assigns the patrol cars. Top officers may periodically monitor radio communications, but they are not able to make continuous observations. Communications officers are seldom high-ranking persons. For example, in one department studied by DRC, on the first and third shifts, the highest ranking communications personnel present were sergeants. In charge of these shifts was a lieutenant who was a line officer in the patrol division. He was in the field much of the time even though he maintained contact with the dispatcher. Compared to the "typical" hierarchical authority model, orders and decisions were initiated far down in the authority structure and not at the top.

In fact, other aberrations in the authority structure are introduced by the reluctance of patrolmen to seek advice from their supervisors. Seemingly patrolmen do not like to bother their superiors since they run the risk of

appearing unable to handle their jobs. Too, because of the detached nature of much police work, the ranking officer may be inaccessible when advice is needed. While on patrol duty, a patrolman more frequently turns to his peers. The dispatcher is usually available for advice and is seen as a peer.

When questions are raised, the dispatcher most often does not refer them to the patrolman's superior, but gives answers based on past situations that he has observed and the past solutions that line superiors have suggested. This goes beyond the routine assignments of patrolmen. Wilson, in recognition of the possible difficulties that could be caused by a dispatcher giving assignments (orders) to a patrolman of equivalent rank, states that dispatchers should be in a staff position as "assistant to" the line commander on duty.<sup>16</sup> This would reduce the possibility of slanting reports for any particular line division of the department and allows him to give advice to the patrolmen based on regulations and past experience. His acting for the officer in charge saves time that otherwise might be spent asking the officer in charge or having to find him in the field. If anything unusual comes up, the officer can be reached. Regardless of the actual title given to the dispatcher, this does describe his operational activities. In any case, the dispatcher takes on a much more important function than would be predicted from the authority model. It is one of the few staff functions in the organization that directly and immediately affects line operations.

The dispatcher mediates, then, between the upper echelons of the department and the lower ones. His position even though formally a staff position is analogous in many ways to that of the foreman in a factory.<sup>17</sup> The role is sort of a buffer zone between the staff and the line personnel. He represents the authority of higher ranking officers while at the same time he receives the complaints and requests from the patrolmen.

This discussion of the organization of the police department around the factors of time, function, and authority is important in its implications for disaster functioning. The timing of a disaster event and its relation to peak or slack periods of mobilization of the police department obviously affects its ability to accomplish tasks early in the emergency period. Too, disaster activities affect certain functional units more than others. Some divisions of the typical department are immediately and directly involved while others play a more supportive role. Organization in terms of authority also has its implications. If a department has a rigid authority structure, the diffuse nature of disaster events creates conditions which would make decision making difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand, if the patrolman is encouraged to act with a degree of autonomy in the context of rules, this pattern of authority may be more easily adapted to the conditions created by actual disaster events.

There are two other aspects of police organizations which have particular relevance for disaster operations. These are (1) the possible resources of manpower that sometimes exist in the form of auxiliary police and (2) the presence or absence of emergency planning within departments. It is to this discussion we turn next.

### Auxiliary Police

One special unit that many police departments have developed is a reserve police force. There are 171,000 trained auxiliary police in the United States. The number of police departments having trained and uniformed police reserves varies somewhat by region with 76 percent of the departments in the middle Atlantic states having auxiliaries, 77 percent of the departments in the Pacific region, and 79 percent in New England. Overall, 62 percent of the cities with a population of over 10,000 have these types of reserves.<sup>18</sup> These reserve police supplement the regular forces during times of increased demands. Therefore, they may be used for spectator control at parades or other events and they often are drawn into disaster activities.

The use of a reserve unit can be seen, as an example, from one of the departments studied by DRC. There were thirty-four active members who paid for their own uniforms and weapons and worked without pay. Half of them worked every other weekend supplementing the department. They were assigned to special functions which involved crowd and traffic problems. For example, they worked a 6:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. shift on Fridays and Saturdays to extend the traffic control capabilities of the department. Although they were trained to carry weapons, the department tried to avoid involving them in potentially dangerous situations.

There was a reserve captain, two lieutenants, and three sergeants. The reserve captain coordinated with and received assignments from the day-shift lieutenant in the traffic division. After receiving his instructions the reserve captain observed the traditional chain of command within the reserves with the exception that any regular officer had authority over a reservist. As this example illustrates, police reserves are mainly used to supplement manpower needs in the area of traffic and spectator control, and are important in disaster activities.

### Emergency Planning

Of all community organizations, police departments are most emergency-oriented or "emergency-wise." In other words, the handling of minor emergencies such as automobile accidents and the like are daily activities for the police. In addition to these routine emergencies, most departments also have plans for extended emergency operations. However, also due to this experience with emergencies, a false feeling of security can develop and the plans may not be well known by departmental personnel. There is often the feeling that the department does not have to worry about planning because any emergency operations, even at the disaster level, are more or less normal duties. For example, in the Flint-Beecher tornado of 1953, the police had a disaster plan for rescue operations on paper but it was not instituted. Instead, reliance was primarily placed on the ability to handle the specific emergency from previous experience. Form and Nosow describe the outcome in the following manner.

The result was a great deal of spontaneous activity, more or less useful, but not representing the maximum effort that both the membership and the organization as a whole were capable of delivering.<sup>19</sup>

Another important area of emergency planning, especially since police departments are the most widely recognized emergency-related community organizations, is planning for relationships with other organizations. Even when plans do exist, this is the area where difficulties are most frequent. Such plans often falter due to the difficulty of coordinating a myriad of community organizations; such a plan may even be ignored at certain stages. For example, the plan for a tornado warning system in one midwestern community studied by DRC was not carried out due to the police department's failure to initiate their segment of the communications chain. Planning is also inhibited by the fact that police departments often see themselves as the key disaster agency with the greatest capability and therefore they do not see the development of interorganizational ties as being crucial to their own operations.

Plans, and, more importantly, familiarity with the implementation of them seem to lead to a more adequate use of organizational resources in the first hours after the disaster impact. This would make planning even more relevant in the case of the police department because its operation is more dependent on its own existing resources. Other organizations have to build their personnel by adding volunteers and other types of resources. In addition to planning, previous experiences with disaster operations also provide a context of familiarity which reduces the tendency to operate randomly and not give attention to the needs of the total situation.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to previous disaster experience, it has been suggested that the civil disturbances which have occurred in U.S. cities in recent years may also contribute to strengthening the capabilities of police organizations relevant to disaster functioning. For example, one city chief DRC talked to attributed the ability of his department to rapidly deploy men to a disaster area to the racial demonstrations the year before and consequent planning and reorganization by the police department.

This "learning" apparently is possible even if a community does not actually experience a civil disturbance. There are few large cities where the police have not become aware of the possibility of such an occurrence and made contingent plans accordingly. In addition, there has grown an awareness of the need to learn from the experience of others. For example, many departments have sent "study" teams to other communities which have experienced civil disturbances.

Certain other events also provide useful experiences. In cities such as Chicago and New York, disaster capabilities are increased for the department by its experience in dealing with large gatherings which occur at such events as the frequent parades and conventions that take place in these cities.

Thus, in regard to at least the police and fire department, there seems to be an increasing awareness of the need for emergency planning and training and a greater ability and interest in learning from the experiences of other departments.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter I

1. O. W. Wilson, Police Administration (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1950), p. 2.
2. Ibid., p. 20.
3. Ibid., p. 23.
4. Ibid., pp. 23-24.
5. Jack J. Preiss and Howard J. Ehrlich, An Examination of Role Theory: The Case of the State Police (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 145.
6. William M. Kephart, Racial Factors and Urban Law Enforcement (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), p. 87.
7. It should be pointed out that variation in the percentage of men assigned to various divisions is not always due to size or special problems of a particular city. Wilson points out that the percentage of men in various divisions differs widely even in cities of relatively the same size. Quoting FBI uniform crime reports in 1938, large cities averaged 48.7 percent of the men assigned to patrol but the variation was from 27.6 percent to 77.2 percent. In cities 100,000 to 250,000 the variation ranged from 9.3 percent to 77.6 percent. He points out that the variation indicates poor organizational ability on the part of police officials. See O. W. Wilson, Police Administration.
8. Know Your Chicago Police (Chicago: City of Chicago, Department of Police, 1964), pp. 11-13.
9. John H. McNamara, "Uncertainties in Police Work: The Relevance of Police Recruits' Backgrounds and Training," in The Police: Six Sociological Essays, ed. by David J. Bordua (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1967), p. 178.
10. Ibid., pp. 181-183.
11. Ibid., p. 182.
12. Ibid., p. 183.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 182.
15. Albert J. Reiss, Jr. and David J. Bordua, "Environment and Organization: A Perspective on the Police," in The Police, ed. by Bordua, p. 49.
16. Wilson, Police Administration, pp. 50-52.

17. For an elaboration of the foreman role, see: Scott Greer, Social Organization (New York: Random House, 1955), pp. 1-4.
18. The Municipal Yearbook (Washington: International City Managers' Association, 1966), p. 439.
19. William H. Form and Sigmund Nosow, Community in Disaster (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 156.
20. For an example of such a "disaster subculture" in Cincinnati, see: William A. Anderson, "Some Observations on a Disaster Subculture: The Organizational Response of Cincinnati, Ohio, to the 1964 Flood," Disaster Research Center Research Note, No. 6, mimeographed (Columbus: Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University, 1965).

## CHAPTER 11

### DISASTER-RELATED TASKS

The police department normally is seen as the organization to be called upon if any difficulties arise for individual citizens or for any segment of the community. In disasters, it is not only one of the first organizations on the scene, but the one which tends to symbolize the authority of the community. Its involvement in disaster activities is based on its pre-disaster orientation to preserving life and property. Under certain disaster conditions, it also becomes involved in many other activities beyond the protection of property and traffic control which fulfill the basic but vague purpose of "service to the community."

#### Types of Organizational Involvement

To clarify the discussion of police activities in disasters let us look first at the role of the police in relation to the other organizations in the community which also become involved in disaster work. To illustrate this involvement, organizations performing disaster-related tasks can be seen as constituting four different types. These can be derived by cross-classifying two variables: (1) the nature of the disaster tasks which are undertaken by the various groups, and (2) the nature of the emergency period structure of these groups.

In a disaster, a group's tasks may be those which are everyday, routine, assigned responsibilities; or, instead, the tasks may be new, novel, assumed, or unusual for the groups involved. If a police department controls traffic, a fire department fights fires, a radio station transmits news, or a hospital treats the injured, these are regular or traditional tasks for such groups. On the other hand, the nonregular or newly created nature of tasks are seen in situations where a National Guard battalion has the responsibility of providing water for a community, an American Legion post shelters evacuees, or firemen sort and distribute clothing from a relief center. Thus, it is possible initially to divide organizations into those having regular and those having nonregular tasks.

It is also possible to differentiate between groups with an old or existing structure and those with a new or crisis-developed structure. The former is one in which members have definite pre-disaster social relationships with one another, especially in their work activities, and exist as an entity prior to the disaster event. During a disaster, the members of such groups work in somewhat the same work relationships they had prior to the emergency. Thus, the members of a city police department activated in a disaster maintain their normal pre-disaster work relationships while they engage in tasks during the emergency.

On the other hand, new structures may come into being during the emergency. Such groups may either mushroom from a small pre-disaster core or they

may involve the crystallization of some totally new entity. The crucial feature is that such groups have no actual pre-emergency existence, at least in the form which they take during the emergency. An example would be a local Red Cross chapter whose handful of full-time paid personnel provides the nucleus for the volunteers who undertake most of the expanded group's work. An example of an emergent group would be the search-and-rescue teams which develop in the immediate post-disaster emergency period.

The particular types which occur in the immediate post-disaster period are depicted in figure 5.

FIGURE 5: Types of Organized Behavior in Disasters

		Tasks	
		Regular	Nonregular
Structure	Old	Type I Established	Type III Extending
	New	Type II Expanding	Type IV Emergent

Type I is an established group carrying out regular tasks. This is exemplified by a city police force directing traffic around the impact zone after a tornado has struck a community.

Type II is an expanding group with regular tasks. The group frequently exists "on paper," not as an ongoing organization prior to the disaster event, and would be illustrated by Salvation Army volunteers running a feeding operation after a hurricane.

Type III is an extending group which undertakes nonregular tasks. This is illustrated by a taxi company utilizing its men and equipment to transport casualties during rescue operations.

Type IV is an emergent group which becomes engaged in nonregular tasks. An example is an ad hoc group made up of the city engineer, the police chief, a local representative of the state health department, and a Red Cross official which coordinates the overall community response during a flood.

Type I organizations, such as police departments, are operating entities prior to a disaster event. When they enter into disaster activities, they usually have specific tasks, fairly clear-cut lines of authority, designated channels of communication, and explicit roles for decision making. These organizations become quickly involved in any community emergency. Other organizations within the community and individuals within the specific organization itself, on the basis of their past experiences, expect such organizations to enter immediately into emergency activities.

Personnel of Type I organizations have a decided advantage in operating in an emergency context since they can carry prior work relationships as well as knowledge of the previous functioning of the organization into their disaster activities. Because most of the tasks which such organizations perform during disasters are the same as the tasks performed during normal times, they have little or no problem dealing with unfamiliar tasks, a problem which Type III and IV organizations experience.

#### Police Department Tasks

The police department, as an example of Type I organizations, is accustomed to performing most of the tasks it encounters in disasters. Its members are accustomed to working together as a unit and are familiar with the procedures and operations of the organization. Because of this, such organizations as the police have fewer operational problems than the other types. This does not mean, however, that their operations are without difficulty.

One way to initiate discussion of these operational problems is to delineate the disaster tasks of the police. The following is a summary of police duties in a disaster as described by a high-ranking police official in a community which had just experienced a disaster situation.

The police department is charged with the responsibility of enforcing within the city all laws of the city, county, and state. The duties of the department include the deterring of law violations; investigations of crime; the apprehension of violators; the control and direction of traffic -- both pedestrian and vehicular; controlling of crowds; offering assistance to distressed persons at all times, including disasters; and to see that all laws are enforced in order to maintain the safety, health, and welfare of the community.

In the case of a disaster, our aim is to move into this area as quickly as possible; to remove the dead to a morgue and see that those injured are hospitalized; and attempt to prevent any additional injuries or fatalities to those in the area by

fallen wires, fallen debris, broken gas mains, etc.; and to set up disaster headquarters in the close proximity of the disaster area so that persons can report and account for themselves or any other members of their families who may be listed as missing. Search crews must be organized to sift through the debris and to remove any injured or dead. This is our number one function.

Our second function becomes the protection of property and the prevention of crimes occurring against properties by setting up security in these disaster areas to prevent the looting or carrying away of other people's property.

The third phase is to furnish manpower to assist those such as the traffic engineer, the city engineer, and all others who are responsible for opening up the thoroughfares to permit a free flow of traffic to the disaster area, and to aid those working in the restoration of communications. These are chiefly the functions of the police department.

Add the task of warning in certain types of disasters to the previous description and one could isolate four major categories of tasks performed by the police in disaster activities. They can be viewed in terms of their similarity to the normal, everyday tasks of the police.

1. Traffic and Crowd Control. Those tasks follow closely the usual control functions of the police prior to disaster impact. Since there is convergence of men and materials on the impact area, this area is usually cordoned off, traffic is usually diverted around the area, and entry to the area is restricted to those who have specific assignments there.

2. Protection of Life and Property. Certain continuing hazards may be created by the impact, such as broken fuel lines, or property may be exposed and subject to further destruction. The exposed property may be placed under guard and threats to the property corrected or minimized.

3. Search and Rescue. Police often find injured victims and initiate medical attention for them. In instances of widespread damage, they may become involved in systematic search efforts to uncover unknown victims.

4. Warning and Evacuation. A community may have some warning time before certain disaster agents, such as tornadoes and hurricanes, become manifest. In these cases, police often become involved in issuing warnings. If the threat of a disaster agent necessitates the evacuation of people from the threatened area, the police often become involved in traffic control, and the provision of transportation and security measures involved in this movement.

These four categories include most police activities in disasters. A department, however, may not necessarily engage in all of them in every disaster. The size and type of disaster event dictates which activities are necessary and/or possible. For example, there can be no evacuation function without a warning period. The nature of police tasks will vary with the type of disaster.

### Differential Tasks in Different Types of Disaster

Lowell Carr has suggested a typology of four different types of disaster events which takes into account the character of the agent and the scope of the community disorganization. These four types are (1) an instantaneous-diffused type of disaster, such as an explosion, which is over before anyone can do anything about it and destroys an entire community, (2) an instantaneous-focalized type such as a schoolhouse explosion which kills or injures the children and teachers in the village school, yet leaves the rest of the community physically intact, (3) a progressive-diffused type, such as hurricanes or floods, which may last for several hours or several weeks and affect whole communities, and (4) a progressive-focalized type such as a mine fire or a ship wreck.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, there may be combinations of these types. Often one type of disaster agent initiates another, or one disaster agent may have several effects. For example, Hurricane Betsy in New Orleans in 1965, in addition to wind damage, also caused floods. The earth movement of the Niigata earthquake in Japan in 1963 caused explosions and fires. In addition, one disaster agent such as a tornado may be included in several of the categories. For example, it may be focalized or diffused depending on how long it stays on the ground in populated areas. However, the typology does help to clarify differences which have implications for tasks.<sup>2</sup>

The police department becomes involved in all types of disasters regardless of the disaster's precipitating event or its culmination and, unlike some other community organizations, regardless of the disaster's size. Precisely which tasks it performs, in addition to traffic control and protection of property, will vary according to the size, type, diffuseness, and duration of the disaster event itself, and to some extent, according to the activities undertaken by other organizations in the community. The police sometimes perform the duties which they perceive as needed but which are not being taken care of by other organizations. The amount of time spent on these duties will also vary with the situation.

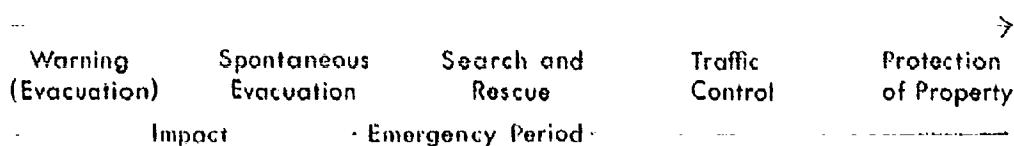
Figure 6 suggests a typical sequence of activities in a disaster where there is warning and evacuation. There is little warning in many disaster situations and evacuation in only a few. Evacuation occurs most often where there is a threat of a flood, a hurricane, or the possibility of release of poisonous gases. Even when a danger such as flooding threatens an area, evacuation is not necessarily carried out by the police. If evacuation does take place, police activities usually involve the control of traffic.

The following are customary police tasks performed in sequence in each of the four main types of disasters outlined above.

1. Instantaneous-Diffused Disaster. Search and rescue, traffic and crowd control, protection of property.

2. Instantaneous-Focalized Disaster. Search and rescue, traffic and crowd control, some protection of property.

FIGURE 6: Sequential Police Tasks in Disaster



3. Progressive-Diffused Disaster. Warning, evacuation, traffic control, protection of property, search and rescue.

4. Progressive-Focalized Disaster. Traffic and crowd control, search and rescue, some protection of property.

#### Problematic Aspects of Disaster Tasks

In each of the four major categories of tasks performed by the police in disaster activities, there are particular problematic aspects having many sources. Tasks which seem similar to the normal operations of the department can become somewhat more complicated in the disaster context. Some difficulties are created by the mobilization for problems which never develop. Other difficulties result from the increased scope of community involvement, since it occasions new interorganizational relationships. Sometimes difficulties are created by the attempt to "control" a situation which is perhaps impossible to control. In each of the four major task categories, there are rather persistent difficulties which will be indicated below.

#### Traffic and Crowd Control

In popular images of disaster behavior, it is often assumed that persons near the impact area will panic and flee. While it is true that people will attempt to avoid danger, the image of panic is not an accurate description of actual behavior subsequent to disaster impact. By contrast, an almost universal phenomenon is the rapid convergence of men and materials toward the impact area. If police interpret this movement of persons by another disaster stereotype which assumes that those who converge have less than honorable motives, there may be extra anxiety about the establishment of security controls around the impact area. Police thus often become preoccupied with problems of security rather than with problems of traffic and crowd control. Problems of control do emerge while attempts are made to facilitate the rapid

entry and exit of men and materials into the impact area. But rather than concentrate on traffic and crowd control, the police frequently spend considerable organizational resources on the establishment of security controls. As we shall see, this in turn sets up a series of consequences for the police, particularly in their relations with other organizations which become involved.

In a focalized disaster where the impact zone is delimited, the area is usually cordoned off in some fashion, often with perimeter guards. Traffic is usually diverted from the area and entry is restricted. When this is accomplished (and it can become much more difficult when impact is not focalized), the police then have to make judgments as to who and what can enter the area. Personnel from other organizations in the community which become involved seek and sometimes demand recognition of their right to enter. Frequently the initial decision of who has legitimate business is left to those who have established the perimeter guard, usually the police. The patrolman has to make the decision on the spot without guidelines. Personnel from organizations with which the police have had little prior contact often assert their right to enter the area because of their organizational obligations. Even more difficult decisions emerge when "unattached" individuals who live in the impact area wish to enter to investigate possible injury to friends and possible damage to their property.

The question of legitimate access to the impact area is often "solved" by the issuance of passes. This moves the decision away from the individual patrolman to some other level within the police department or to some other organization. This move to centralize authorization means, however, that someone still has to determine if a person has legitimate business in the impact area.

In the initial stages of the emergency, various organizations may issue their own passes. Accepting a pass issued by another organization implies the acceptance of the legitimacy of the involvement of that organization. The police are more likely initially to recognize passes from organizations which they would expect to be involved in emergencies, such as medical units, fire departments, and perhaps utility companies. Passes are sometimes rejected, particularly those of organizations with which the police have not traditionally been involved or those which have a high percentage of "unknown" volunteers. Persons claiming to represent Red Cross or civil defense are often unknown or unfamiliar and are sometimes challenged. These challenges present, in turn, threats to the organizations these personnel represent and can, of course, delay response to critical needs. The way in which this control problem is "solved" tends to follow the sequence already suggested. After the perimeter guard is set up:

1. Access to the impact area is initially regulated by the decisions of individual patrolmen. (If other security forces are used, such as the National Guard, their personnel tend to be much more rigid in the interpretation of rules of access.)
2. Access to the impact area becomes regulated by the establishment of one or several checkpoints, generally supervised by a ranking police official.

3. Formalized passes come to be issued by several organizations acting independently. This places the responsibility of accepting them on the police. The police generally accept those from organizations which they consider legitimate.

4. To clarify the multiplicity of passes and questions of legitimacy, the police may attempt to issue its own passes. These are issued at a central place and are acceptable at any checkpoint.

5. The responsibility for issuance of passes is given to a nonpolice agency, such as civil defense or some other municipal agency. While the police may still implement the system, the decision making is broadened to include other involved persons in the emergency.

The transition from one stage of the sequence to the next reflects the continued effort to solve the control "problem." After a perimeter guard has been established, there are certain requirements necessary to develop an adequate system of control -- a system which determines that an individual (in most cases, a person filling a particular occupational position) has some right to enter: information about the situation and knowledge about organizations, their involvement and their personnel and, in turn, coordination and communication among various organizations.

Keeping in mind these conditions as requisites, it is easy to see why passes, then, become problematic. During the period immediately after impact, there is little coordination among the organizations which have become involved. The convergence of a large number of persons makes the establishment of the validity of each difficult. The individual patrolman is faced with a number of discretionary judgments. Confronted with these problematic decisions, he may request guidance. Departments may decide to localize such decisions in a smaller group of officials at specific locations. This provides some focus for information and communication and a greater degree of consistency.

After initial search-and-rescue activities and the removal of those needing immediate medical attention, police departments generally can release resources to be used elsewhere. Since control measures seem more obviously their responsibility, police departments often attempt to develop an "official" pass system. The initiation of a more regularized pass system, however, places the department in the position of "officially" having to pass judgment on the appropriateness of the involvement of other organizations. This attempt involves politically sensitive decisions which most departments like to avoid. Consequently, such decisions are likely to be turned over to "higher" levels of local administration -- the mayor, the city manager, the local civil defense directors, and so on. By this time, patterns of communication and coordination have developed to the point where a structure for making such a decision exists which then can be implemented by the police.

The major point to be made here is the fact that the development of an efficient pass system is predicated on some type of "legitimizing" decision making. This seldom exists in the early hours of the emergency period when it is most needed.

The problematic nature of the pass system introduces a touch of irony. The preceding analysis raises doubt as to the possibility of developing the necessary conditions for an efficient system. Even if they could be developed, questions still could be raised as to the necessity for a pass system. Much of the motivation for a pass system seems to come from the fear that individuals who enter the impact zone will engage in antisocial behavior. This fear is misplaced, as we shall discuss in the next section. In addition, based on observations in a wide variety of disaster situations, no system of perimeter guards is completely effective. Persons who know the area better than the security forces can usually find access. Unless the impact area is completely ringed with security personnel, access is still possible. If it is tightly ringed, this would be a misuse of manpower as well as a major contribution to the problems which such forces are supposed to solve -- problems relating to the convergence of personnel on the area. The most realistic problem that the police face is not security but traffic control. Convergence of vehicles on the impact area can interfere with emergency work. The strategies involved in traffic control and the establishment of perimeter control are different and perhaps somewhat antithetical. The preoccupation with security then often detracts from the development of effective traffic control. Too, police departments are more likely to have the skills necessary for traffic control but much of their manpower inevitably becomes diverted into the less essential security tasks.

#### Protection of Life and Property

Subsequent to disaster impact, continuing hazards may be created, such as broken electric and fuel lines. The police, because of their early entry into the impact zone, may have to seek out the obvious hazards as well as be alert to the emergence of less obvious ones. In some instances, they may have to decide the safety of certain areas and then evacuate them or prevent access until repairs are made. In addition, the police often are the source of notification to organizations which can initiate repairs. Sometimes these tasks require knowledge and diagnostic skills which are not usual among police personnel. They are tasks, however, with which departmental personnel have usually had some previous experience, even though on a much more limited scale.

Since portions of residences and businesses may be destroyed leaving access to the contents of these buildings, there is invariably a great concern about the possibility of looting. Public officials expect these types of community emergencies to result in problems of protection; officials request additional law enforcement units. This fear, of course, is often translated into the development of perimeter guards and other security measures. National Guard troops may be mobilized to take part in such measures. The fear of looting and the steps taken to prevent it are frequently mentioned in the initial reports which emanate from a disaster area. Thus, police department resources and personnel become involved in these tasks.

While reports of looting are common in disaster areas, there is significant evidence that actual looting is rare in communities subsequent to natural disaster impact. Many studies of disasters mention reports of looting, but very few cite authenticated cases. One study that did inquire into actual

cases of looting was the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) study of White County, Arkansas, after it was ravaged by a tornado in 1952. In the community that suffered the greatest damage, about 1,000 of the 1,200 residents were left homeless. A random sample of people from this town and adjacent areas were asked whether they had lost any property by looting. Only nine percent reported that they, or members of their immediate household, had lost property that they even felt had been taken by looters. And fully one-third of these people were uncertain whether the loss was really due to looters, or whether the missing items had been blown away or buried in the debris. Finally, most of the articles were of little value.

In contrast, 58 percent of the people questioned said they had heard of others' property being stolen. In fact, nine percent claimed that they had even seen looting in progress or had seen looters being arrested. The NORC study team on the scene, however, could verify the theft of only two major items -- a cash register and a piano.<sup>3</sup>

Other disaster research confirms the rarity of looting. A study made after the 1953 floods in the Netherlands found that, although there were many reports of looting, law enforcement agencies could discover not a single verified case. The Dutch researchers attributed many of the reports of looting to memory lapses in the immediate post-flood period, and pointed out that a number of people who reported thefts later found the missing items.<sup>4</sup> Charles Fritz and J. H. Mathewson, in a review of disaster studies published up to 1956, concluded that "the number of verified cases of actual looting in recent peacetime disasters, both in the United States and in foreign countries, is small."<sup>5</sup>

More recent studies point in the same direction. The Disaster Research Center at The Ohio State University, in field studies of more than forty disasters both in the United States and abroad, has found extremely few verified cases of looting. Actual police records support these findings. For example, in September 1965, the month Hurricane Betsy struck New Orleans, major crimes in the city fell 26.6 percent below the rate for the same month in the previous year. Burglaries reported to the police fell from 617 to 425. Thefts of over \$50 dropped from 303 to 264, and those under \$50 fell from 516 to 366.<sup>6</sup>

Even though the research evidence on looting creates grave doubts as to its prevalence in natural disaster situations, the belief that looting will be widespread has important consequences for the police. This belief leads to the commitment of police personnel to "prevent" such behavior. Again, such personnel might be more effectively utilized in realistic disaster tasks, such as traffic and crowd control. It is true, however, if the police did not take such security measures, they would be severely criticized by other community officials who also have similar expectations concerning what "should happen." It creates the paradox, however, that a major deployment of police in disasters relates to almost nonexistent problems while other realistic tasks may not be attended to because of the lack of manpower.

### Search-and-Rescue Activities

One of the tasks not usually well organized subsequent to disaster impact is search and rescue. The lack of organization is a result of several factors. First, the task can be overwhelming if there are a large number of casualties. Communities may be prepared to handle small periodic emergencies but lack the routine equipment and personnel to handle large numbers of casualties. Second, the need for search and rescue occurs immediately after impact. It also is characterized by anxiety since there are possibilities of saving lives and avoiding further injury. Third, the task is likely to be unorganized since seldom does any one specific community organization assume responsibility in this activity. This uncertainty concerning responsibility places the police in an ambiguous position as to its role.

Since a significant portion of the force may be on duty and can be dispatched to the impact area, the police often become involved in search and rescue. Particularly in the first part of the emergency period, search and rescue is unorganized and individualized, involving primarily those uninjured in the impact area aided by incoming organizational personnel, including policemen. The commitment of these personnel to such isolated and often geographically diffuse tasks creates added problems of communication and control for the department. While a patrolman becomes involved, he may be away from radio communication and cannot accept other assignments which may reflect other priorities in the department. When skilled nonpolice personnel who can assume search-and-rescue tasks enter the area, police officials often order their patrolmen to leave these initial tasks and to concentrate on other tasks for which the department has clearer organizational responsibility. The re-allocation of personnel may be difficult because of communication problems, the continued commitments of specific policemen, and, sometimes, the individual patrolman's reluctance to accept other tasks which seem to have less salience.

In any case, the police often become committed to search-and-rescue work because they are on the scene when the task needs to be accomplished and because of the absence of other skilled persons. They are organized to respond and can reallocate personnel so they almost inevitably become involved. Once committed to these tasks which have high priority, the police find it somewhat difficult to become disengaged.

### Warning and Evacuation

The police department is usually one of the first organizations to learn of an impending threat or of the impact of a particular disaster agent because it routinely monitors the community and its environment. The department may be informed of disaster impact by community members who have learned to notify the police about less mundane matters; a specific patrolman may report the onset of a focalized disaster agent; or, if it is a progressive type of disaster agent, police patrol cars at different points in the community may signal information concerning the growing impact. In addition, the police often have access to other communication inputs. They frequently have close ties with the fire department, occasionally sharing common communication facilities or routinely monitoring each other's calls. In some communities, the police may

handle ambulance and other emergency services. In other areas which experience periodic threats from tornadoes and hurricanes, the police often have their own weather Teletype and have a close working relationship with the local weather bureau.

With these capabilities for communication and as the recipient of such information, police departments become the key link in the warning process. This creates special problems for them and, in turn, forces them into close relationships with other organizations within the community. In the past, many communities in the United States have been relatively informal about developing emergency plans. More recently, plans and their implementation have been given increased attention. Plans developed originally for protection during possible nuclear attack are frequently activated when a natural disaster occurs. The police play a key role in these plans because of their mobility and communications capabilities. In addition, the "authority" of the police in such situations is accepted more readily by community members. For example, Drabek found that families who were warned by the police to evacuate were much less skeptical of the warning and much more likely to evacuate than those warned either by peers or by the mass media.<sup>7</sup>

With these assets the police often come to see their organization as the key agency in disaster response. While this image is in large part correct, this "centrality" sometimes results in a reluctance to keep other community agencies informed since the role they play in a community emergency is secondary. But, particularly in the warning process, failure to pass on information can affect the operations of almost every other community emergency organization. For example, in one case known by the Disaster Research Center, a police officer in the communications office did not notify other organizations in the community because he felt that he should go immediately to the field. He also felt that the warning plan issued by local civil defense was ineffective and irrelevant. Consequently, the warning system for the whole community broke down.

Even if interorganizational communication is effective, the police and other community agencies often face difficult decisions as to whether warnings should be issued. This is particularly true where the probabilities of impact are difficult to assess and where evacuation may be required. This reluctance to issue warning stems from several factors. Sometimes agencies fear that warning will evoke panic on the part of the threatened populations even though research has shown that this is usually not the case.<sup>8</sup> Also there can be a reluctance to disperse manpower for warnings, particularly if this manpower might be needed for immediate post-impact tasks. There is also the fear of looking ridiculous if the threatened impact does not occur. Too, there is often reluctance to issue warnings which may involve massive evacuation since they create the need for traffic control and preparations for the shelter and housing of evacuated populations.

Another particularly difficult problem for the police emerges when persons are unwilling to leave the threatened area, even when ordered to evacuate. The police are often reluctant to "force" them to evacuate if their justification for remaining is their desire to protect their own private property. This

justification is sometimes combined with an attitude on the part of those who desire to remain that they can "take it." This combination of reluctance to evacuate and a "heroic" attitude is found more frequently in areas where disasters are recurrent and is reinforced by previous successful attempts in "sitting it out." This particular evacuation dilemma is "resolved" in a number of ways. Occasionally, warnings are not issued or if they are, no further action is taken to force evacuation, thus placing the responsibility for complying on those in the area. Since the legal structure regarding police powers in a forced evacuation situation is vague in most jurisdictions, the police sometimes resort to "illegal" means in order to accomplish evacuation. They may enter homes to make certain all residents have left or they sometimes threaten to charge individuals who are unwilling to evacuate with "looting" if they remain. Even though such alternatives create anxiety for the police, such means are generally accepted as being appropriate for the situation.

Evacuation is particularly problematic for the police. It is a preventative act which can reduce the consequences of a threat; but those who have to evacuate only appreciate the lack of consequences if actual risk occurs. That is, if evacuation is ordered and actual threat develops, then the evacuated population show appreciation for not being subjected to the consequences. If evacuation is ordered and no threat develops, then the evacuated population often blames the agency which ordered the evacuation for their inconvenience. Since the prediction is always difficult for those disaster agents which allow warning and evacuation -- such as floods, hurricanes, tsunami waves, tornadoes, and so on -- community agencies, including the police, often demand much confirming evidence before ordering evacuation. Since the decision to evacuate is judgmental, and evidence is seldom clear and overwhelming, community agencies often err on the side of deciding not to evacuate. If people do not evacuate and experience disaster impact, later they most frequently blame the disaster agent; but if people do evacuate and do not experience disaster impact, they most frequently blame the warning agency.

These then are some of the difficulties faced by the police department in carrying out tasks in each of the four major categories: traffic and crowd control, protection of life and property, search and rescue, and warning and evacuation. It should again be pointed out that a police department will not necessarily engage in all of these activities in every disaster situation. Such factors as the size and type of disaster will affect the nature of the police emergency activities. The consequences of these activities for the organization will be examined in the next chapter.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter II

1. Lowell J. Carr, "Disaster and the Sequence-Pattern Concept of Social Change," American Journal of Sociology 38 (1932): 209-210.
2. For a more detailed discussion of the community context and organizations that become involved in disasters, see: Russell R. Dynes, Organized Behavior in Disaster: Analysis and Conceptualization, Disaster Research Center Monograph Series (Columbus: Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University, 1969), especially chapter two.
3. Russell R. Dynes and E. L. Quarantelli, "What Looting in Civil Disturbances Really Means," Trans-action 5 (May 1968): 10.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Charles E. Fritz and J. H. Mathewson, Convergence Behavior in Disasters: A Problem in Social Control (Washington: National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council, 1957), p. 53.
6. Dynes and Quarantelli, "Looting in Civil Disturbance," p. 10.
7. Thomas E. Drabek, "Reactions to Sudden, Unfamiliar, and Unexpected Stress," mimeographed (Denver: Final Progress Report to the National Institutes of Mental Health, September 1967), pp. I:9-I:15.
8. See, for example: Federal Civil Defense Administration, "The Problem of Panic," Civil Defense Technical Bulletin TB-19-2 (June 1955): 1-2, reprinted in Ralph H. Turner and Lewis M. Killian, Collective Behavior (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957), pp. 94-96; E. L. Quarantelli, "Images of Withdrawal Behavior in Disasters: Some Basic Misconceptions," Social Problems 8, no. 1 (Summer 1960): 68-79; E. L. Quarantelli, "The Nature and Conditions of Panic," American Journal of Sociology 60 (November 1954): 267-275; and Duane P. Schultz, Panic Behavior: Discussion and Readings (New York: Random House, 1964).

## CHAPTER III

### ADAPTATION TO DISASTER DEMANDS

Heavy demands are placed on a community and on the organizations in it when a disaster strikes. Organizations must not only be effective in the use of their resources such as manpower and equipment, but also be rapid in their response. During the first few hours, it is usually felt that quick action may save casualties. Thus there is a greater demand for organizational resources in this short period than in any situation that the organization would normally encounter.

This chapter describes some of the major adaptations police departments use to cope with the demands placed on them in a disaster. The next chapter will describe the effects of these demands on the structure and functions of the organization.

#### Initial Considerations

It must be remembered that the effect of a disaster on an organization varies with its type and tasks. In addition, disaster demands may affect segments of the organization differentially. Too, contingency factors, such as the time of day at which the disaster occurs, may be important.

Even in those organizations, such as the police, which are geared to dealing with emergency situations, the routine patterns developed through long experience prepare the organization only partially for disaster operations. Because of the demands a disaster makes plus the possible disruption of many of the facilities which are sometimes taken for granted in existing emergency plans, such as telephone service and accessible streets, an organization usually has to make a number of decisions regarding the reallocation of its resources. In general, the police department adapts to the demands created by a disaster impact in the following ways:

- Assigning priority to demands.
- Reallocating personnel internally.
- Redeploying and recalling field personnel.
- Adding extraorganizational personnel.
- Reducing and delaying normal tasks.

#### Assigning Priority to Demands

Police departments always exercise a degree of selectivity in responding to the demands made upon them even during their routine operation. For example, if patrol cars are busy when a report of a burglary and a complaint of a barking dog are received simultaneously, the person complaining of the barking dog must wait. The police may explain the delay to the client but, in certain instances, they may even refuse such a call. The police, then,

(perhaps more than any other organization) are accustomed to placing priorities on the various demands made upon them and allocating their resources accordingly. This pattern is continued during disaster operations, and only those calls which are defined to be serious and pertinent are accepted. In this way, existing resources can be used in the more serious calls. Those complaints which would have low priority in normal times are often not assigned by the dispatcher or are assigned in a desultory fashion: "If you get by such and such a street, see about so and so." This suggests that the discretion of the dispatcher is even more important in a disaster period than during normal times.

There are some qualitative differences between the assessment of normal demands and disaster situation demands. Verification of requests and, therefore, structuring the sequence of fulfilling them becomes more difficult in disaster conditions. For example, the police receive a request for a crane to lift debris from a man who has been trapped. It may be difficult to dispatch a car to the scene for verification of the request but, since the situation concerns the preservation of life, the call would have high priority. However, a crane is not ordinarily a part of the departmental equipment and would have to be obtained from another organization. If the communications channels are broken or overloaded, obtaining the necessary equipment is even more difficult.

In general, incoming reports of the effects and consequences of disaster impact have a different "feel" than the routine requests to which the department is accustomed. Also, the initial activities and/or assignments of individual patrolmen may later show themselves to have low priority. Adherence to a consistent priority system may be inhibited if there are communication difficulties or when several high priority items must be accomplished simultaneously. In spite of these difficulties, the priority system is extended into disaster operations and is used more consistently since the demands made on the department frequently, and often continuously, exceed the department's ability to process them.

#### Reallocating Personnel Internally

The patrol division is the basis of and the historical reason for the existence of the police department. The other sections of a police department are designed to support the patrol division in its basic functions of controlling crime, preventing criminal acts, if possible, and solving cases. In most disasters which have been large enough to necessitate the use of the entire police force, the patrol division is most often put in command of emergency operations. Wilson has summarized the basic reasons why patrol most often oversees operations as:

1. The patrol division has the largest force, and consequently integration of members of other divisions with it is more simple because there is need to impose out-of-the-ordinary control over a smaller number.

2. It is the only operating division that invariably provides twenty-four hour service.
3. It is usually the first to learn of emergency calls and to reach the scene of action.
4. Since its duties encompass the entire police field, it has broader powers and greater responsibility than any other division.<sup>1</sup>

The traffic division is becoming increasingly important in modern American cities and serves as an adjunct to the patrol division. Unlike the patrol division, the traffic division's manpower is not usually maintained at full strength around the clock. These two basic units -- patrol and traffic -- are the most important divisions of the police department during disaster operations. They constitute the major portion of the police department's equipment and resources; that is, these divisions possess two-way communication in conjunction with highly mobile and trained units whose men are familiar with the city. This gives the police department special advantage over other organizations.

An organization can adapt somewhat to the increased demands of a disaster situation through the internal allocation of personnel. However, reallocation within a police department is somewhat limited because the police involvement in disaster activities is similar to their normal duties. Thus, there are fewer segments of police departments which can be shifted to supplement field operations. Records, accounting, and other clerical maintenance divisions are often staffed with civilians and have no equipment for field work. The work load of the equipment maintenance section increases during a disaster and hence, personnel from this section can only infrequently be released for field work. In fact, maintenance often becomes increasingly important during disaster crises. Equipment failure can be paralyzing for organizations such as the police, which depend on mobility. The normal activities of the detective, juvenile, and vice units may be suspended during the disaster period, but the members of these units are rarely directly utilized in supplementing field personnel. Instead, they become involved in duties which could be performed by any individual -- coffee and doughnut supply, keeping status reports, etc. Their experience and familiarity with field work tends to be ignored as a source of additional manpower. This may partially result from the fact that these divisions are "plain clothes" without the uniform which provides a symbol of authority. A uniform or other visible symbols of authority seem to be useful during the early stages of the emergency period and the personnel without such organizational identification cannot be as effectively utilized. This also pertains to civilian personnel. Perhaps the critical dimension, then, is the uniform rather than the actual needed skills. However, there are some duties such as keeping lists of the dead and missing, gathering information from hospitals, receiving phone calls from concerned relatives and residents, etc., which the police are not able to perform any better than are members of other organizations. In these instances, their authority as members of the department is, in large part, irrelevant.

### Redeploying and Recalling Field Personnel

The initial operational adjustment which must be made by the police department during the disaster period is the redeployment of men already in the field. This may vary from the complex plans of metropolitan police departments wherein covering units are automatically sent from other areas and where field commands are carefully outlined, to the more informal (and typical) method of dispatching patrol cars to designated areas and then making decisions concerning where other patrol cars should go.

The typical first reports of a disaster are vague and the police usually enter the impact area with little awareness of the extent of impact. The first reaction in the deployment is to send the cars already on routine patrol near the area. They report in, ask for more units, and try to give an estimate of the number of men needed. At this point, assessment is difficult and an "oversupply" of men is often sent. However, let us assume a diffuse type disaster in which much manpower is required. By the time that the reporting officers radio their findings, the dispatcher may have received reports of the disaster from other sources and other areas of the town. If commanding officers are present, they, at this time, may go into the field and designate the handling of the disaster activities in the station house to one of the higher ranking patrol officers. If the higher ranking officers (captains and up) are not present at this time, the field lieutenant goes into the area in question, and the senior ranking officers are contacted and informed of the situation.

When more men are requested, the first to be assigned to the impact area are those on patrol or traffic duties. Then off-duty patrolmen and second priority traffic personnel are called in. They may be contacted according to a preplanned telephone branch notification system or more informally by calling each officer's home. The call-in system also includes a radio or television announcement requesting off-duty officers to report. Upon hearing of a disaster, many off-duty officers report in automatically. Often, off-duty officers from neighboring towns come. These men work informally and frequently as citizens rather than as policemen because of legal jurisdictional problems. Most police departments do have an organized plan for telephoning off-duty officers. Since departments are oriented to emergency activity, policemen are aware that they may be asked to report at any time and usually make arrangements enabling the department to contact them. Since the police department operates on the basis of a twenty-four hour day, more potential manpower is available to it than to other community organizations which operate one or two shifts. This means that within a short time, a department can amass from two to three times the number of personnel it ordinarily requires. The department's major means of adaption to the increased demands then is the mobilization of these personnel.

After the initial mobilization and period of operation, it is frequently realized that if the entire force continues to work, all of the men will be exhausted at the same time. The usual solution is to release a number of men from duty and to change the work schedule from three eight-hour shifts to two twelve-hour shifts. This enables a large number of men to be in the field at any given time and yet provides a sufficient supply of rested men. Still many

patrolmen will go home, rest for only three or four hours and, unable to rest longer due to the excitement of the event, will appear for duty. Thus, there may be even more manpower in operation at any given time than a formal announcement of twelve-hour shifts would lead one to believe.

#### Adding Extraorganizational Personnel

The recall of internal personnel may not provide the number of persons needed to supplement field workers. In this case, outside sources of personnel are sought. If a department has an auxiliary police organization, its commander is contacted and he, in turn, contacts the auxiliary officers. Meanwhile, auxiliary policemen may report for assignment without waiting for official notification. The state police and sheriff's offices may be contacted and personnel from these units sent directly to specific field assignments. If the situation requires even more manpower, conferences between the mayor and the chief of police may result in a request for the National Guard. On some occasions, this request is made unilaterally by the chief. Other police-related organizations may contact the police department to send men, or the police may contact them. This would most typically involve contingents of military police (MP's) or unspecialized troops from a nearby military base.

As noted in chapter one, a police department seldom, if ever, employs volunteers in police work. It may use citizen volunteers to some extent in search and rescue and may cooperate with volunteer groups related to civil defense and Red Cross, but the police are reluctant to incorporate volunteers in their own organization. They emphasize the legal difficulties involved and the time required to deputize volunteers. The deputizing of volunteers is seen as risky from the police point of view since they might inadvertently deputize people who have prison records, or who might commit crimes while performing their "police" assignments. One official summed up the police attitude in his remark that, in addition to the above reasons, the police must be disciplined and trained to duty, while volunteers would not be so trained and might run off at a crucial moment to check on their families. Whether this is true or not, it does seem to represent the feelings of the police toward volunteers. The Disaster Research Center did observe one instance where volunteers were deputized as temporary police. The situation did create problems for the organization in regard to the assignment and control of the volunteers. Accusations of looting were made against them and their use was shrouded in a general feeling of distrust and confusion on the part of the public as well as the regular members of the police department.

#### Reducing and Delaying Normal Tasks

During the high demand period of a disaster, which may last several hours or several days, many normal duties of both the line and staff sections of the organization are suspended. Reports and various types of paper work performed by the line officers and their commanders are of minimum concern in a disaster and are consequently delayed. Most paper work in the staff section also gets delayed, and even the relatively important operations log may be neglected.

Detective work involving long-term investigative duties is set aside. The normal traffic assignments for that period are ignored and reassignment is made on the basis of the traffic problems caused by the disaster.

The patrol units often leave their usual patrol posts and become involved in disaster field activities. The remaining patrols (of which there may be none in the first hours) must cover different and broader territories. Thus, patrol changes to some extent from the narrower routine duties to the broader, more general police duties. The men remaining on regular patrol are less concerned with misdemeanor arrests, such as the arrest and booking of drunks, but turn their attention to the protection of property.

The rate of normal complaint calls to the police decreases during the emergency period. Most of the calls reaching the police concern the disaster event, especially in a diffuse type disaster. The minor complainants either have "larger" problems to worry about or perhaps realize that the police are otherwise occupied.

There is one other factor that should be mentioned here. While many of the routine police tasks are ignored or delayed, there is also a reduction in the types of activities which normally absorb the organizational effort of the police department. A diffuse disaster interrupts the total life of the community, including both legal and illegal activity. In each disaster DRC has observed, the rate of normal nondisaster-related complaints has diminished. This reduction may continue for several days or weeks. Part of this reduction seems to be created by the feeling of community solidarity which emerges during the emergency period. Too, disaster activities provide a diversion as well as an opportunity for the participation of many citizens. In addition, as we have already suggested, because of the reduction in regular patrol activities and the overt ignoring of minor offenses, the normal demands on the police are even further reduced.

#### Summary

In any disaster large enough to require extensive mobilization of the police to meet the demands, a series of adaptations in organizational procedures occurs. Initially attention is given to assessing the demands made on the department and setting priorities for fulfilling them. Such priorities are generally guided by already existing procedures which can be implemented in the "new" situation. Early in the emergency period, some internal reallocation of personnel is usually made. This type of adaptation has limits since the police have few "unnecessary" divisions to reallocate in such emergencies. The major adaptations made involve the use and redeployment of field personnel and the extension of working time. By recalling personnel from off-duty shifts, the police department can increase somewhat its shift personnel (triple their manpower by recalling the equivalent of one shift personnel from eight to twelve hours). The department can also increase its manpower while these personnel conduct their emergency duties by reassigning them through the utilization of available resources that no other disaster-involved organization possesses. In some instances, certain police functions, particularly those

involving traffic control and security, can be handled by extra-organizational personnel, such as police auxiliaries, National Guard, county and state patrolmen, and in rare instances, deputized volunteers. A final adaptation commonly used is the delay of routine, normal police tasks until the major part of the emergency is over. Such anticipated delays, however, are often less necessary since normal rates of complaints as well as the number of certain offenses tend to decrease during the emergency period. This allows the department to focus more clearly on its emergency tasks.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter III

1. O. W. Wilson, Police Administration (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1950), p. 55.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONSEQUENCES OF DISASTER ACTIVITIES FOR THE ORGANIZATION

With the possible exception of the fire department, the police exhibit fewer structural changes and undergo less stress than any other organization which may become involved over the course of the disaster operations. This is related, of course, to the very nature of the organization itself. As mentioned in previous chapters, the police may be characterized in terms of what has been called a Type I or "established" organization carrying out "regular tasks" in and around the impact zone. Thus in pre-disaster situations such organizations may be characterized as bureaucratic structures having fairly clear lines of authority, defined communication channels, and relatively explicit decision-making roles. In addition to these characteristics, most Type I organizations and especially the police have plans for mobilization in the event a disaster strikes. Quite often operations go on around the clock and, for this reason, extra personnel are always available. In addition predetermined plans usually exist for the notification of off-duty personnel. Many categories of personnel, however, are expected to report without any notice whatever. Another reason for the relative lack of stress and structural change in such organizations as the police is that each position can be filled by any one of several persons. Thus the organization can withstand loss of personnel and still continue to operate in a fairly efficient manner.

#### The Operating Context

Disaster operations, however, are always problematic to a greater or lesser degree as old patterns must be adapted to new, emerging situations. Thus even established organizations with the above factors working in their favor encounter operational problems. The basic problem can be seen as adapting the functioning of the ongoing organization to radically changed environmental conditions. This is a problem faced by the police as well as other similarly structured disaster-relevant organizations.

The characteristics of this new situation in which the police find themselves working have been discussed elsewhere. Those characteristics most relevant to the police are the following:

1. Immediately after impact there are conditions of great uncertainty.
2. Immediately after impact there are conditions of great urgency.
3. Some organizational autonomy is lost during the emergency period.

For the purposes of illustrating these points, a disaster such as the tornado will be assumed. Also, it will be assumed that the department being

discussed is of the size that might be found in any American city in the 100,000 to 500,000 population range. As one moves above or below this range, differences will occur but they will not be too extreme. Such an assumption is also made for the remainder of the chapter.

Immediately after any disaster has struck a community, conditions of great uncertainty exist. The extent of damage is unknown as is the status of personnel and equipment. While it is known that heavy demands are likely to be made on the organization, little is known as to what their nature or duration will be. Thus the police, like other organizations, find themselves in a situation of knowing that a great deal will be demanded of them but knowing little of what these demands will be or of their capacity to respond to them.

Related to this uncertainty is a sense of urgency or what has been called a need to "do something." Thus it is common to find police committing large numbers of men and equipment to action before adequate information about the situation is available. Often more resources are committed than are necessary, and at times are wasted in performing unnecessary tasks. It has also been observed that traditional routines become "unnecessary luxuries" under the press of the conditions of urgency. These points will be elaborated in this chapter.

During the emergency period it is common to find all organizations experiencing a loss in autonomy. Organizations are no longer capable of controlling their relationship to the environment and for this reason they can no longer make decisions as to their own activities in relative isolation. Coordination with others is literally forced on all organizations. The problem of loss of autonomy is one that seems especially crucial to the police as they often regard themselves as being the logical focus of "command" of disaster operations. Thus clashes with other organizations claiming this right have been known to occur. This, of course, suggests the need for inter-organizational planning before a disaster occurs, a point to be discussed in the next chapter.

These factors -- uncertainty, urgency, and loss of autonomy -- are major elements in the operating context in which the police department finds itself in disasters. Operations in this context have consequences for the structure and functioning of the department since many of the changes which occur are unanticipated and, in turn, affect the capacity of the organization to respond effectively. These changes can be noted primarily in:

1. the authority structure,
2. the decision-making process,
3. communication channels.

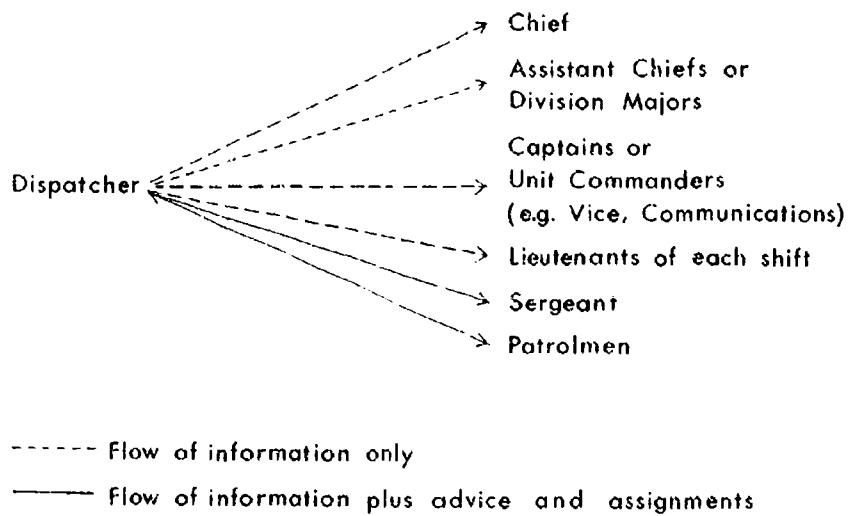
#### The Authority Structure

Changes in the authority structure of the police can be seen at two different levels: those which occur at headquarters and those in the field.

### Headquarters Operations

In the pre-disaster period the authority structure of a department would resemble the pattern shown in figure 7. Studying this figure, one notices that with one exception, it does not differ greatly from the structure of most other bureaucratic organizations. The dispatcher and communications unit as a whole occupy a central position in the flow of information and to a lesser extent in the determination of assignments. Therefore, while the communications division is usually organized and commanded like most other divisions, it has been singled out for emphasis in figure 7.

FIGURE 7: Pre-Disaster Organizational Structure

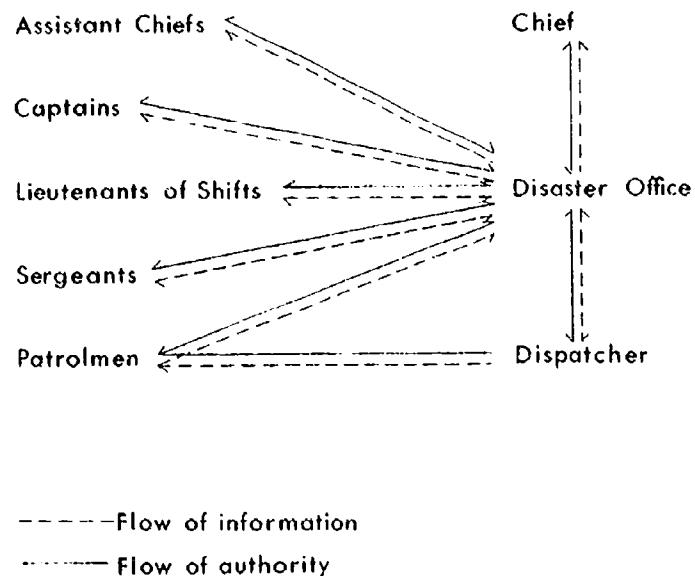


In many ways the pattern illustrated in figure 7 does not change markedly in overall disaster operations. Characteristically, at impact an officer (usually the senior officer on duty) is designated as being in charge during disaster operations. Thus a certain amount of authority of a coordinating nature shifts from the chief of police and other high-ranking officers to the "disaster officer" whose major duty becomes the deployment of men, material, and any additional help which may arrive. Such additional help usually comes from personnel who are members of off-duty shifts and who have either been

called in or have reported on their own initiative. Normally they are assigned either to their regular officer or to another unit which, while expanded in size, is organized in a manner not too different from that of normal times. A second major source of manpower is the police auxiliary or reserve force. The only significant difference in the way it operates in a disaster as opposed to normal times lies in the fact that the reserve commanding officers will work directly under the designated disaster officer rather than the person to whom they are normally responsible. In addition it is not uncommon to find the disaster officer changing the structure of the shifts.

If charted, the chain of command during disaster operations for most departments would resemble figure 8. Several points should be made in relation to figure 8. First, it should be emphasized that such a structure, while representing what seems to be a striking departure from normal authority patterns, usually emerges in the early phases of disaster operations, mainly

FIGURE 8: Organizational Structure: Initial Disaster Operations



during the time when search-and-rescue operations are being conducted. As the situation becomes more clearly defined in terms of the demands to be placed on the organization, the chain of command shifts back toward a form resembling that shown in figure 7.

A second point concerns the role of the communications unit. If this unit is essential during normal times, its importance during disaster operations cannot be overemphasized. Often it is the only source of contact the police have with the field, at least in the early phases. More will be added on this unit later but it is important to point out now, in figure 8, the centrality of communications to police operations in disasters. Without accurate information the disaster officer cannot begin to make decisions regarding either the deployment of men and equipment or any operations the police might undertake.

Thus far the discussion of the authority structure and the effects of a disaster on the normal chain of command has dealt only with operations at headquarters. This aspect of operations, while exhibiting significant changes shortly after impact and perhaps a certain amount of stress, usually operates rather smoothly and assumes a highly organized nature soon after impact. Such factors as size, nature of disaster, amount of preplanning, and the efficiency of communications between the field and headquarters can act either to increase or decrease this general efficiency. This conclusion, however, holds only for the patterns of authority at the headquarters and cannot be generalized to field operations or to the decision-making process.

## Field Operations

In discussing the field operations of the police in a disaster, it is important to keep in mind the basic characteristics of the organization. Perhaps most crucial for understanding what happens in the field is the para-military structure of the police.

While the resemblance to the military -- in the use of ranks, insignia, and in many other ways -- is striking, the comparison can be misleading. It has been suggested by Janowitz and others in studies of the military that the soldier can best be seen as a part of a unit. In most noncombat situations he has little autonomy, exercises little initiative, and acts only when commanded. Even in normal situations, a patrolman finds himself in a vastly different context. He often patrols alone or at most with one other patrolman. While he must handle each situation in terms of legal rules, he is expected to do so alone and without counsel, except in unusual or difficult situations. In this sense, the lone patrolman finds his analogue perhaps more closely in the professional working in a large bureaucratic organization. Each is an "island" working for the most part alone, but on defined tasks.

If the policeman resembles a professional more than a peacetime soldier, what happens to him in a disaster is analogous to what is experienced by a soldier as he enters battle. The effects of combat upon the organization of military units has been well documented, especially by Janowitz.<sup>1</sup> He suggests that "in combat the maintenance of initiative has become a requirement of

greater importance than the rigid enforcement of discipline."<sup>2</sup> Janowitz points out the effects of combat on the individual soldier and, to a certain extent, on the combat unit, in the following way.

The combat soldier, regardless of military arm, when committed to battle, is hardly the model of the ideal bureaucrat following rigid rules and regulations. In certain respects he is the antithesis. The combat fighter is not routinized and self-contained. Rather, his role is one of instant improvisation, regardless of his service or weapon. Improvisation is the keynote of the individual fighter or combat group. The impact of battle destroys men, equipment, and organization that need constantly to be brought back into some form of unity through on-the-spot improvisation. In battle the planned division of labor breaks down with the occurrence of contingencies not anticipated by tactical doctrine. Persistent initiative and improvisation would, however, lead to a gradual dissipation of tactical units, unless the integrity of the larger organization was not periodically reinforced. Withdrawal to reserve locations provides opportunities for reaffirmation of the doctrine and values of the larger organization, re-evaluation of improvised solutions, and realignment of personnel.<sup>3</sup>

Initiative, improvisation, and finally reorganization are the key words which form the basis of the analogy between the police in a disaster and the military in battle. Individual policemen take initial action often without reporting to headquarters. Improvisation occurs in that certain tasks are accepted which strictly speaking are not police functions and these tasks are often not performed in "official" ways. As the situation begins to clarify, reorganization begins to take place. Perhaps the best way to illustrate these processes is to describe the tasks and the consequent decision-making structure which evolves from the point of initial warning (if there is any) to the point in time at which the community has returned to a relative state of normalcy.

#### The Decision-Making Process

The impact of the disaster on the decision-making process can best be seen in the context of different stages of involvement in the disaster. At least four phases of the disaster involvement of the police can be identified:

1. warning and impact,
2. mass assault,
3. reorganization,
4. cleanup.

#### Warning and Impact Phase

The first of the phases of disaster involvement begins upon the receipt of a warning from some outside source that the area is in danger. This warning may vary from several days as in a hurricane, to absolutely none as might

occur with an earthquake. The ideal would be, of course, to have as much time for preparation as possible. This time, however, is usually not available in any extended form. The problems of this phase become those of efficiency rather than of overcoming stress. The disaster has not occurred and there always remains the hope that it will not take place. Therefore, emotional factors are not as influential as they are after impact, and all men and equipment are still operational.

Decision making in this phase remains quite organized and does not deviate too greatly from usual patterns. This tends to be related to the factors just cited, but perhaps even more relevant is the presence or absence of disaster plans. If such plans are present, decision making is vastly simplified as the only major decision becomes whether to operationalize the plan or not. Where such plans must be evolved on the spot, decisions often are made in haste, without adequate information about what may be about to happen, and by personnel who may or may not have the legitimate authority and qualifications to do so. This, however, usually is not as great a problem in this phase as it may become after impact. Decision making for the most part is speeded up but still remains within previously prescribed channels.

The principal tasks performed in this phase center around warning and evacuation. It often is the responsibility of the police to activate warning devices such as civil defense sirens or other similar mechanisms. Also, people must be contacted who are in potential danger areas and removed to areas of safety. This creates traffic problems as well as problems of coordination. However, a more serious problem, at least for the individual patrolman, is caused by people who may refuse to leave the area. The policeman must decide whether he can force them to leave or not and if so, by what means.

As can be seen, the scope of tasks performed in the warning phase is in most cases quite narrow. This will vary with the amount of warning given. When the warning period is short, obviously not much can be done in the way of preparation. However, preparations in this phase have been observed that were quite broad and detailed. This phenomenon usually is found only where what have been called 'disaster subcultures' exist and where warning periods are extended. Examples would be Gulf coast or Atlantic coast cities such as Miami or New Orleans which are especially vulnerable to hurricanes. On the other hand, there are many instances on record where threat is indicated but where no preparations were made.

In summary, then, the warning phase may be nonexistent, or it may be extended over several days. The tasks usually revolve around the functions of warning and evacuation. These may be quite simple and narrow in scope or very broad and complicated depending on the time factor, the presence or absence of disaster plans, the size of the department, and many other factors. Decision making remains fairly structured in most cases although the demands of the situation may somewhat speed up the process.

### Mass Assault Phase

The mass assault phase begins immediately after impact. It is during this period that most of the problems of an organizational nature develop within the police department. Search-and-rescue operations make up the bulk of the tasks performed, and to a certain extent there is a breakdown of authority (although most high police officials will not admit this). In these first few hours the police tend to assume any tasks not being performed by other organizations in addition to what are their officially defined tasks. According to the police these tasks are assumed simply because no one else is doing them. There is, however, reason to believe that a second reason for assuming these tasks is to aggrandize their own authority and their role as protectors of the community. At any rate, conflict can and does develop as other organizations move into the field and take over some of these functions. For example, conflict between the police and the local civil defense organization often occurs wherever civil defense has been given the overall de jure authority for disaster operations. Police regard this as their legitimate domain since they have trained men and equipment available twenty-four hours a day and feel they know the city best. Also, resentment is expressed in the form of the complaint that the police do all the work but get none of the credit.

Due to the rushed nature of activities during this period many members of the organization act on their own initiative and begin "doing something." Men are assumed to be in the field performing tasks and no verification of their activities is made. In this sense men are "lost" to departmental control. Additionally, it is not unusual to find many high-ranking officers rushing out into the field giving more orders than is normal and giving them to personnel not actually under their command. Thus, the normal hierarchy is circumvented with, for example, a captain giving orders to a patrolman rather than a lieutenant. As a result, decision making becomes haphazard. Many officers who should be at headquarters are in the field, thus forcing important decisions regarding coordination and reconnaissance further down the chain of command. In effect, the efforts of these officers are utilized in narrow and often irrelevant tasks, given the overall demands of the situation. Since field operations are unorganized and radio traffic is heavy, patrolmen often make decisions they otherwise would not attempt without consultation. Also, these decisions, rather than being made in terms of legal requirements and/or police regulations, are made spontaneously in terms of the narrow scope of the immediate situation. This phenomenon occurs most often in smaller departments but has been observed even in large departments. It is a potential problem in any size city.

Many examples of such rushed and unconsidered action have been encountered. In one city relatively inexperienced in handling disasters, all but a handful of the entire police force went to the site of a shopping center which had been hit by a tornado. This left traffic dangerously tangled in other parts of the city and created problems in getting people to the hospital. A similar circumstance occurred in another city when men and equipment were sent to the area first reported damaged. Actually the tornado had cut a swath through the entire town and men subsequently had to be redeployed with considerable delay and difficulty.

These may be extreme cases, but the fact remains that they did occur. Planning and a careful survey of needs made before the commitment of resources can help prevent the development of such a state of disunity. The attempt to develop a picture of the effects of the disaster is needed before effective action on the part of the police or any other organization can be taken.

In summary, the mass assault phase, while short in duration, tends to be the most poorly organized. Action tends to occur before the need for it has ever been clearly established. Authority patterns break down to a certain extent and decision making is haphazard and carried out in terms of criteria other than those officially prescribed. Men and officers tend to rush into the field when often their presence would be more valuable elsewhere. Those called in from off-duty may never report for assignment as they become involved in tasks before ever arriving at headquarters. Police tend to get involved in a wide variety of tasks, ostensibly to fill a vacuum created by the temporary inaction of other organizations. Thus in a situation where order and careful consideration of a variety of factors is required, unconsidered and often undirected action commonly characterizes the organizational response.

#### Reorganization Phase

The reorganization phase usually begins anywhere from two to five hours after impact and may last as long as twenty-four hours. Duties are assigned formally, shifts may be reorganized, work crews are formed, and police are pulled out of tasks which are not theirs to perform. Toward the end of this period many patrols are back on normal duty and the structure of authority resembles much more closely that of normal times with the exception of the disaster officer. A command post has been set up and the search is over or at least proceeding in an organized way. Traffic is also under control.

Decision making as a result becomes much more rational in that information is more readily available. In addition the overall needs of the stricken area are considered when any action is taken, quite different from the nature of decision making in the mass assault phase. This is in part a response to a need for unified action. Security is the emphasis at this stage, and patrolling and setting up cordons and pass systems require organization by definition so as to avoid needless overlap.

In this period the police continue to perform many of their routine (but not necessarily emergency) duties such as the protection of property. It is at this point that other organizations may begin to assume many of the co-ordinating roles in the disaster. Whereas in the mass assault phase the police are mainly concerned with emergency tasks such as search and rescue, operations in this phase are concerned with the protection of property and keeping unauthorized personnel such as sightseers away from the area. Traffic control remains a major concern.

The statement made above that decision making is more rational during this phase needs to be qualified. It is not uncommon to find police making decisions in terms of many popularized misconceptions of what actually happens

in a disaster. The one most relevant in this phase is the idea that property left unguarded will be looted. The police often commit many men to the tasks of protecting property by manning cordons and similar devices. As we have already indicated, looting is not a major problem in natural disasters. Thus what appears to be a rational decision to commit large numbers of men and large amounts of material to security operations turns out to be a decision which is based on a false concept of the nature of disasters. Such a decision may actually even hamper the onset of the fourth phase of cleanup. This is not to say some emphasis on security is not needed. However, rather than large numbers of men, a single patrolman cruising the area in a marked car and perhaps roadblocks at key entrances to the stricken area are often all that is needed.

In summary, the reorganization phase is keyed by planning and (for the most part) rational decision making. Security and traffic control have replaced search and rescue as prime concerns, albeit this concern is to a certain extent misplaced. Information is available and the situation has been defined. Authority has been reasserted and by the end of the period many patrols and other divisions are back to their regular duties. Cleanup is already under way.

#### Cleanup Phase

The cleanup phase usually begins about twenty-four hours after impact and may last anywhere from two days to several weeks. By the time this phase has begun almost all police are back to their normal duties and are on normal schedules. Special police work in this phase is minimal and consists mainly of skeleton crews assigned to oversee operations and perform such tasks as traffic control where heavy equipment is in use. Decision making and authority structures have also returned to normal patterns. Thus the essence of this phase is little involvement coupled with a return to normal, routine operations.

In summary, initial police activities center around warning and evacuation with subsequent shifts to search and rescue and finally to the establishment of security. It is primarily during the search-and-rescue phase that routines are severely disrupted. At this point "valor becomes the better part of discretion" as authority tends to break down and decision making becomes haphazard in nature. Otherwise the police tend to operate rather smoothly as they cope with the disaster situation. One factor which if not handled effectively can disrupt the best of disaster plans is communications, and it is to this area that attention is now directed.

#### Communication Channels

The communications center is virtually the heart of the operation of any police department in normal times. When disaster strikes this importance becomes even more evident. The volume of communications traffic shoots up drastically and is centered about reports of damaged areas, requests for equipment and men, and instructions for their deployment. A greater variety of communication devices is used. Such changes can and often do create great

problems if not anticipated, or if they are left to chance. Disasters have been observed in which these problems have in large measure been overcome, but these appear to be exceptions. For example, New Orleans in the hurricane and floods of 1965 had three radio channels open to the police, one of which was designated solely for disaster use. Even with this elaborate setup, however, problems did develop of a minor nature. Communications are always problematic, and for smaller departments or less well equipped and prepared departments the problems are likely to be plentiful.

If for no other reason, communications become a problem because of sheer volume. The rate of telephone calls, for example, goes up drastically as the following table, compiled from information gathered during the Chicago snow-storm of January 1967, illustrates.

TABLE 1  
TELEPHONE CALLS TO CHICAGO POLICE

	Normal Day Friday October 31, 1966	Emergency Period Friday January 27, 1967
Total Calls.....	6,991	14,939
Overload.....	169	1,559
Busy Signals.....	4	723

One factor lessening the impact of the disaster on the communications unit is the fact that minor complaints tend to decrease and become almost nonexistent during the disaster operations. Dogs suddenly stop barking and people no longer hear "strange noises" downstairs. Additionally criminal acts such as robberies also tend to diminish in frequency. Those that are called in are noted and if they can be defined as looting receive immediate (if possible) response. However, if the perpetrator has left the scene, these are usually referred to the detective division for later action. It should be pointed out that many calls are for information only. Thus the "little old lady who doesn't like barking dogs" may still be active.

Radio traffic follows a similar pattern. Calls for normal duties such as accident investigation tend to decrease while the increase in radio usage related to the disaster is tremendous. During normal times most radio use centers around the dissemination of assignments by the dispatcher and calling

in of status reports by patrolmen. In a disaster this changes to reports of damage, requests for men and material, and instructions for deployment. Each of these types of communication has problems associated with it.

The communication of damage reports and subsequent requests for aid tend to be heaviest in the early phases of disaster operations, especially during the mass assault phase. As these damage reports come in, one serious problem usually develops. One dispatcher mentioned that a large number of officers became so excited after a tornado that they all wanted to give running accounts of every fallen tree rather than overall summaries of damaged areas. Such accounts, of course, clog valuable air space and make it difficult both for the dispatcher in his attempts to evaluate the situation and get messages out, and for other men in the field wishing to contact headquarters. Reasons for this vary from the excitement of the moment to more conquerable ones such as the fact that many men in the field simply do not understand the nature of information needed by the dispatcher nor the damaging effects their monopolization of the radio can have.

Requests for equipment and men often present problems as well. As mentioned earlier, it is rare that a systematic reconnaissance is made before such requests are submitted. Also, high ranking officers many times have rushed into the field and begun making requests without having a complete picture of overall community needs. Unless the dispatchers are especially efficient, an uneven distribution of resources is inevitable in such circumstances.

To counteract this, a high ranking officer, often with some political officials, eventually endeavors to make a reconnaissance to get an overall view of the situation. Problems arise, however, in that police often regard this information as being for their use alone and refuse (or attempt to refuse) to release it to other organizations except by specific request. This of course adds to their perceived role as key agent in disaster operations.

Given the problems just mentioned, the efficient deployment of men and material, especially in the early stages, becomes nearly impossible. For example, decisions regarding the usage of resources may not be made by the disaster officer but rather by someone in communications. This occurs because the disaster officer is also trying to gather information and is attempting to coordinate extraorganizational personnel and men from other shifts, as well as dealing with various other problems. In this light it becomes even more crucial to have efficient and well trained personnel manning the communications center.

As a part of general deployment activities the dispatcher is passing out assignments to men. While many of these may be specific and clearly defined, the term "assignment" is not to be taken literally. Often included are such odd jobs as escorting dignitaries or showing the National Guard where to go. A common occurrence in the early stages is telling an officer that "something" is occurring "somewhere" and he is to "see what he can do."

An additional task handled by the communications center relevant to deployment is contacting by telephone, if operative, various businesses which have equipment needed in the field. This equipment may vary from flashlights to cranes. Also being contacted are various hospitals. On the surface this task does not seem to be too difficult as long as telephones are operative or men are available to serve as runners. However, it has been found that many of the lists of phone numbers, and even of addresses, are seriously out of date, a process that can occur rather rapidly. For extremely large police departments, this aspect of deployment is not serious as it owns most of the equipment it would need in a disaster. Unfortunately few departments are equipped on such a scale; therefore this problem tends to occur in most departments.

So far, discussion has been devoted only to communication between headquarters and the field, and to a limited degree within headquarters. Communications between units and areas in the field is also a critical aspect of disaster operations. Once again radio is the primary means of interaction among field units, but this often must be supplemented by other means due to the great volume of air traffic. The main supplementary means of field communication are walkie-talkie, runners or cruising patrolmen, and the setting up of field command posts with a patrol car or similar unit serving as field telephone.

Walkie-talkies have not been in general use until recently because of their limited range, but where they have been used they have been found to be quite effective. However, their scarcity combined once again with the limitations of any radio or short wave system precludes total reliance on them as an effective means of communication. Messenger systems are often set up and in addition, officers in the field may cruise from scene to scene to visually supplement information coming in from other sources.

An additional aid to field communications lies in the use of field command posts. In at least one disaster these were set up in the first hours after a tornado had struck to assist in search-and-rescue activities by requesting ambulances, men, and material, and by assisting volunteers and members of other organizations. By the next day these had become firmly established field headquarters located at definite intersections. However, their primary task had become one of coordinating the efforts to maintain security and traffic control. Perhaps their greatest value, however, was in acting as a filter between central headquarters and the field. Unnecessary communications were screened out and the dispatchers were relieved of some of the pressure their job entails.

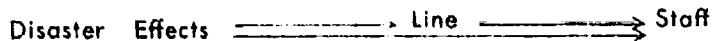
To summarize, it must be emphasized that communication operations are perhaps the most critical for the performance of the entire police organization. A rapid increase in the volume of both line and air traffic is generally experienced with both being used somewhat inefficiently, at least in the early phase of operations. Transmissions center around damage reports, requests for men and material, and the actual deployment of these resources. Each of these creates its own unique set of problems. Field communications are handled mainly by radio and to a lesser degree by walkie-talkie and messenger systems.

Command posts set up in the field greatly aid this process. In conclusion, communications are crucial and complicated, and form an area of disaster operations which must be efficiently handled if the police are to satisfactorily perform in a disaster.

#### A Final Note on Differential Impact

One factor which has been implied throughout the discussion but has never been specifically highlighted is the differential impact a disaster agent has on different segments of the police department. The demands created by the disaster situation do not have a unitary effect on all segments of the organization. As has already been suggested, certain divisions are more relevant than others. Too, certain segments of the organization are affected earlier than others. For example, taking the two main segments of the organization, line and staff, the disaster event affects the line functions first and most significantly while later and to a lesser degree, it affects the staff functions. (See fig. 9.)

FIGURE 9: Disaster Effects on Organizational Functions



Typical peaks of activity of various segments of the police department are shown in figure 10. This figure assumes an instantaneous diffused type of disaster. The curves are illustrative of comparisons and are not measurements of organizational rates of activity or manpower used.

The following outline summarizes the nature of the demands which are made on the various segments of the organization during the emergency period.

Maintenance Division: Under great stress during the emergency period caused by high demand for any available equipment and increased use rate causing a much greater breakdown rate. They continue to deal with the disaster after line segments return to normal activity since they are responsible for repairs and replacement of damaged equipment. In certain disasters, the police may lose a large amount of equipment. Thus disaster effects on the organization may last longer than the emergency period. In such cases, overall police strength is lowered and

FIGURE 10: Variations in Divisional Activity

	Warning and Impact	Mass Assault	Reorganization	Cleanup
Vice, Juvenile, and Detective				—
Patrol		—	—	—
Traffic	—	—	—	—
Communications	—	—	—	—
Maintenance	—	—	—	—
Records	—	—	—	—

great demands are later put on the financial-administrative units. Because of this, the disaster ultimately may affect policy in staff units as well as field units.

Vice Division:

Juvenile Division:

Detective Division:

"Odd jobs" increase demands to the extent that some of their regular work may be deferred but greatest pressure on the organization is not in these divisions.

Patrol Division:

Traffic Division:

Greatest pressure on the organization is in these divisions and extra manpower is assigned here. Duties are analogous to normal times but there are highly increased demands. There is somewhat more stress on patrol division to get back to normal duties. As a result traffic continues disaster activities after patrol division returns to normal duties. Command of operations is performed by the patrol unit.

Records and Communications Division:

Manpower for the records and other auxiliary, nonline departments may be placed at the disposal of the patrol division for "odd jobs." The communications section is under great stress dispatching and performing other

activities. The records segment may suspend its regular work at impact time. This is the segment of the organization that is under greater demands than normal after the other segments of the organization are back to normal duties, although the demands on them will not carry the sense of immediacy that the disaster period brings to other segments. The communication division is under great demand during the immediate disaster period doing normal job tasks.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter IV

1. Morris Janowitz, Sociology and the Military Establishment, rev. ed. (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1965).
2. Ibid., p. 41.
3. Ibid., p. 42.

CHAPTER V  
RELATIONSHIPS OF POLICE WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Introduction

A disaster by its very nature affects all parts of a community, each part affected in varying degrees. Because of this, many organizations of different types and performing different tasks become involved. Thus interaction and interdependence among these groups is inevitable. The police are drawn into this emergency web. It is not uncommon for police to resist attempts to form such a web, especially if it means being placed either directly or indirectly under the control of another agency which they regard as unqualified. The purpose of this chapter is to outline briefly which organizations are most likely to interact with the police, and when during the disaster such contact occurs most heavily. In this discussion, as in chapter four, it will be assumed that a disaster such as a large tornado has struck a medium-sized city in the United States causing widespread damage.

Theoretical Background

The interdependence which develops in any disaster situation can lead to both cooperative relationships and to those characterized by conflict. In any given situation, both tend to be found. However, the nature of disaster tasks encourages the growth of cooperative interaction around the shared goals created by the need to overcome the effects of the disaster.

Cooperation is facilitated, of course, if the organizations involved have had prior contact with each other. Every organization is forced to depend on other sources for supplies and aid as it performs its daily tasks. Such dependency relationships usually are built on a cooperative basis, and when they exist in this form the disaster activities of a given organization are greatly aided. Cooperative relationships can also emerge from preplanning. This is usually initiated by such agencies as civil defense or through other emergency plans of local government. Organizations which will become heavily involved in disaster activities are usually represented in the plans, and each is given certain duties and responsibilities. Commonly a central location is designated where liaison representatives of all of these organizations and perhaps others can meet and coordinate the disaster activities in the event the need arises. Where these plans are well developed and rehearsed, they tend to work well and conflict is minimized. In many other places which are not as "disaster-prone," however, the Disaster Research Center has found that these plans often are superficial and are "dust gatherers." When disaster does strike in such places these plans often are ineffective and inter-organizational coordination must be developed on the spot, a fact which heightens the potential for conflict.

In light of the above it can be said that no static plan is ever perfect. Even in disaster-prone areas, plans are constantly under study and revision.

If there are many organizations, conflict is more likely. Attempts to develop coordination and control conflict often serve only to increase the conflict. This is especially so if there is a scarcity, either real or perceived, of resources, or if new organizations emerge whose functions overlap with existing ones, or if there is a similarity in goals among existing organizations. The need for planning, coordination, and cooperation is evident in any disaster situation. Conflict, whenever it develops, only serves to emphasize this need. For a variety of reasons, however, this need often comes to light only after a disaster event.

Another factor affecting interorganizational relationships in a disaster is that of legitimacy. This characteristic does not necessarily imply a status of legality, but rather refers to being accepted by the community as a valid institutional form for carrying out a particular course of action.<sup>1</sup> Organizations tend to interact more with those defined as having legitimate functions to perform in a disaster. Questions of jurisdiction and authority are frequently settled in terms of legitimacy rather than by legal definitions in a disaster. It is quite common, in fact, to find legal norms being evaded or bent to allow an organization to perform a necessary task of which it is capable but which it is not legally authorized to perform.

Such occurrences could cause a certain amount of confusion if widespread, but this is lessened by the very nature of the situation. What is regarded as legitimate is a function of the existing value system which in turn relates to the nature of the environment and interaction occurring within it. As these factors change, and they do abruptly and often drastically in disasters, the existing values and norms may become temporarily irrelevant or inapplicable. Thus what appears to be a violation of legal and other norms which existed prior to the disaster may be seen as conformity to a new set of norms which are viewed as legitimate in the new context created by the disaster.

To summarize, it can be said that interorganizational relationships in a disaster must be viewed in terms of a developing overall community consensus and unity. Prior to a disaster any city or town has many facets in that there is never complete, total integration of all of the elements active in the community. There is a high degree of order, however, as the "give and take" interaction occurring daily tends to be institutionalized and standardized. A disaster acts to destroy this equilibrium and force the building of a new one. The constraints of property and contract about which the former equilibrium was built are shattered and new sources of order must be sought. Out of this temporary disorder a structure begins to emerge. As various community organizations become involved, the fragmentation is overcome and a degree of unity and coordination is restored to the community. Authority in the form of the possession of knowledge and other resources replaces strictly legal authority. Thus it is often the police who inherit the job of coordination in a disaster. They possess the most information (not necessarily the most accurate) and their legitimacy and competence are usually accepted by most parts of the community. Other agencies who might assume this responsibility are the mayor and city government or the local civil defense agency. More than one conflict situation has developed when these agencies all claimed the legitimate right to oversee disaster operations. Nevertheless, the police

always occupy a central position in whatever form of operation emerges. As such they interact with many organizations over the course of a disaster. This subject forms the core of the remainder of the chapter.

#### The Police and Other Organizations

The police department is usually among the first organizations to become involved in disaster activities, and the initial task of coordination of field activities often becomes theirs. They are the most heavily committed in terms of manpower and equipment and in the stage immediately following impact may be the only organization, with the possible exception of the fire department, which is mobilized and actively working in the field. It is not uncommon to find the feeling among police officials that they accomplish more while the officials of other organizations are getting to their offices than these same organizations do after they finally become fully mobilized.

When the first hours of intense pressure which characterizes the mass assault phase have passed and when other organizations have had enough time to mobilize, the police are forced to begin working more closely with these other groups. At first, however, this involves only the top officials of the various organizations as they attempt to establish some degree of order by defining areas of responsibility and jurisdiction. Gradually, even though the police may retain ultimate responsibility for disaster operations, they begin returning to normal police duties. By the time the cleanup phase of operations is fully under way there usually are only a few policemen assigned to coordinate these activities, and the role of the police has become more nominal than real.

As the disaster operations unfold, the police encounter a variety of organizations. Some of these, such as local sheriff's departments, are quite familiar to the police while others may be unfamiliar. Furthermore, some are encountered at certain stages of operation but not in others. Hospitals would fall into this category. Still others, such as other agencies of the local government, are relevant throughout the disaster, or at least until the police have completely withdrawn from the operations. Table 2 presents a list of the organizations most likely to interact with the police at the various stages of operations.

As noted in table 2, a disaster such as a large tornado is being assumed. In a different type such as a hurricane, the table would appear in somewhat modified form. For example, the National Guard would probably enter the scene earlier to assist with warning and evacuation. Also, contact with the weather bureau would probably be maintained for a longer time period to obtain knowledge about potential flooding. Other changes would also undoubtedly occur as the nature of the disaster agent and its effects varied.

Again referring to table 2, it would appear that the organizational contacts of the police in a disaster are quite numerous. However, relatively speaking, the police and also the fire department have less interaction with other organizations in a disaster than do other groups. In addition, the

TABLE 2  
PHASES OF DISASTER AND ORGANIZATIONS RELEVANT TO POLICE

	Phases		
	Warning and Impact	Mass Assault	Reorganization
Organizations....			Cleanup
1. Warning Network (if any)	1. Fire Department	1. Fire Department	1. Construction/ Demolition Crews
2. Civil Defense	2. Civil Defense Volunteers	2. National Guard	2. Civil Defense Volunteers
3. Weather Bureau	3. Citizen Volunteers	3. Civil Defense Volunteers	3. Government
4. State Police	4. Red Cross Volunteers	4. State Police	4. Utilities
5. Sheriff's Department	5. Sheriff's Department	5. Sheriff's Department	.....
6. Fire Department	6. State Police	6. Government	.....
7. Hospitals	7. Government	7. Utilities	.....
8. Government	.....	.....	.....

NOTE: Assumes a fairly widespread disaster with rapid onset and short period of impact  
on a medium sized city.

effects of these contacts on the actual operations of the police department are minimal. Most of these contacts are requests for information or some form of aid rather than specific orders. Another factor minimizing the influence of these contacts is that the police are rather autonomous and are free to function with only very broad restrictions. This is illustrated by the fact that in most disaster operations studied by the Disaster Research Center it has been found that the police liaison officer sent to the city government (or civil defense headquarters) acts only to keep these groups informed as to what the police are doing. Rarely does he relay an order from such groups to the police, even if these groups have legal responsibility for disaster operations. The police, due to their unique position in the community, can refuse to aid other organizations and sometimes do if the "errand load" becomes too heavy.

Thus it can be seen from table 2 that the organizations the police department deals with are varied. Some perform "line" functions such as the fire or sheriff's departments while others, such as the Red Cross, are mainly "staff" agencies performing administrative and auxiliary tasks. The break between the two is not a clean one, but it does serve to indicate the diverse nature of the organizations being encountered by the police. If the organizations impinging on the police vary with the stages of the disaster and by function, the nature of the relationships with these organizations also varies. A brief elaboration of the characteristics of these relationships follows.

#### Fire Department

As was mentioned previously, the police and fire departments are usually the first groups on the scene of a major disaster. Communications are basically two-way between these groups as each keeps the other informed of new developments in the situation and of damaged areas and manpower needs. The variables affecting how well organized these relationships become are unclear. Generally it would seem that this would vary with the amount of preplanning and the precise nature of the disaster. For example, it would be expected that the interaction of these two departments would be somewhat less unified in a disaster which occurred with little warning than in one for which there was a great deal of advance notice. Another relevant variable would be the amount of accurate, verifiable information which exists regarding the situation. A situation characterized by little valid information would be much more likely to produce a reaction of mass assault than a rational, coordinated attack.

It is common to find the fire department on the scene assisting the police in search-and-rescue operations and in later phases even though the threat of fire may be quite small. Their involvement tends to last for the duration of disaster operations but may be concentrated in the search-and-rescue phase. Most commonly, the fire units are placed under at least the nominal command or direction of the police commanders in the area unless there are fires to be fought. Rarely does the occasion develop where a fire department refuses to enter into disaster operations. One such incident did occur in a midwestern city which was hit by a tornado. There were few fires

and the threat from gas leaks was minimal. However, the fire chief felt he should keep his resources in total readiness and refused to give any aid other than the sending of an inhalator and some small pieces of equipment. Such a reaction is atypical. Most fire departments are more than willing to serve where needed and will work closely with the police in all phases of disaster operations.

#### City Government and Civil Defense

Interaction with the city government and its various agencies tends to occur throughout all stages of disaster operations. This is due to the fact that it is the city government which in normal times legally oversees the operations of the police department as well as all other municipal organizations. It was mentioned above that the police are usually exercising the actual authority involved in coordinating disaster operations. This is so even though the city government may "on paper" be in charge of carrying out this function.

Typically the interaction involves several organizational levels, both of the police and of the municipal government. It is not unusual to find ad hoc committees made up of the police chief, mayor, fire chief, city council, civil defense director, and other such officials ostensibly formed to control disaster operations. The main function of these committees becomes, however, the exchange of information from agency to agency. The police are asked for information regarding damaged areas or about what might be needed to carry out field operations. Any decisions made at this level, as previously noted, have little effect on the overall operations of the police in the field.

Lower level interaction also occurs between specific elements of the police and the city government. During normal daily operations a great deal of contact between the police and such municipal agencies as the traffic engineering department and city engineer's office occurs. These contacts revolve about such routine items as street construction, traffic lights, and road signs. Such interaction is magnified in importance in times of disaster as it becomes more important, for example, to know what routes to hospitals are open and passable. This interaction is likely to occur at any level in the organization rather than being restricted to the upper levels as in the above case.

Civil defense\* on the local level may be granted the legal authority to coordinate disaster operations. This legal authority may be exercised especially where local civil defense is strong. But the relationships with civil defense often involve problems not created by the informal assumption of control by the more familiar agencies of the municipal government. The local government exercises nominal control over the police in normal times, and the continuation of this relationship into disaster operations tends to be regarded as legitimate. Civil defense is a special organization, however, and exercises

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\*Civil defense can be seen as referring to the total emergency activities within a community, but here the referent is to the organization "civil defense."

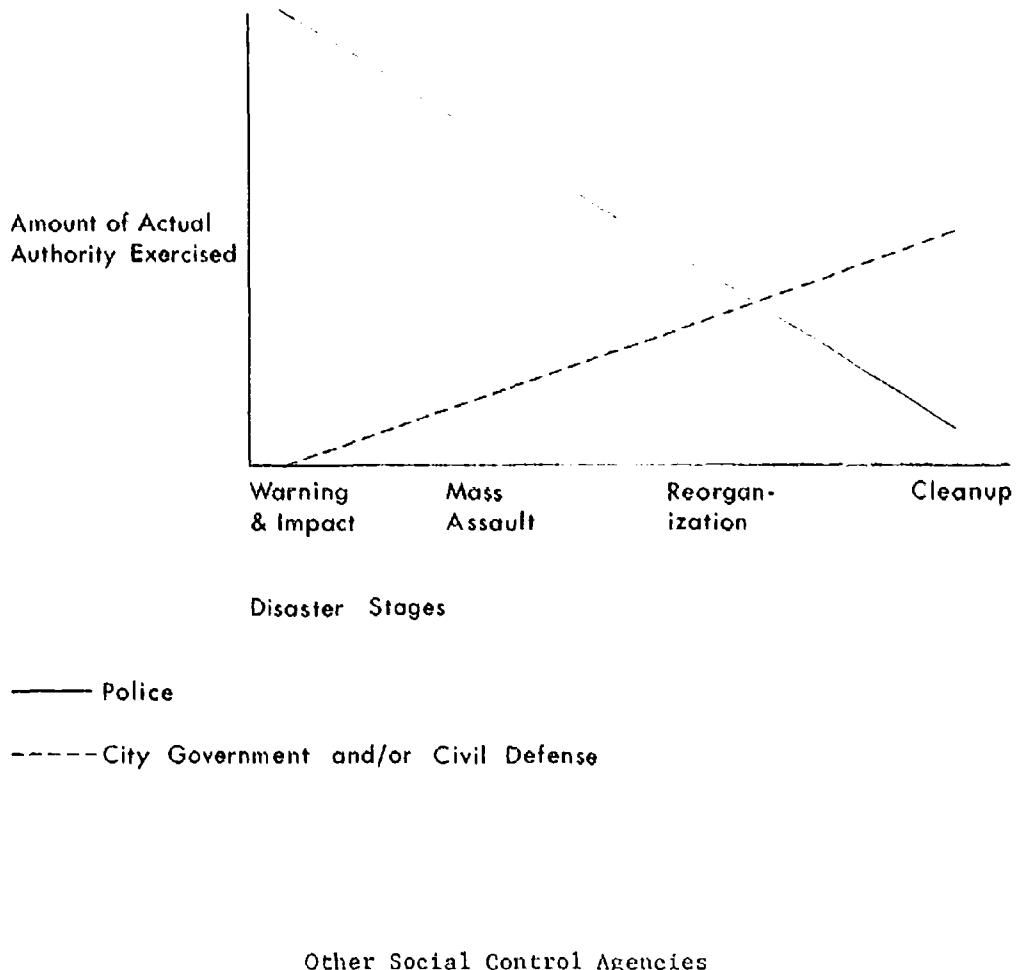
no control over the police in normal times. Thus, when it tries to assert its authority in a disaster, tension is sometimes a by-product. The police usually argue that they are much better qualified to oversee disaster operations because of their twenty-four-hour availability, the ability to mobilize quickly, and their supply of equipment and well trained men. For these reasons, where the civil defense is seen as ineffective, it tends to be ignored by the police. Where it is strong, the deference granted it is lax and usually consists only of having a liaison man present at civil defense headquarters to fulfill the formal requirements of the disaster plan. His primary duties consist of informing civil defense of what the police are doing and relaying requests for aid from other organizations to the police.

Another aspect of civil defense which brings it into contact with the police is its role as coordinator of volunteers. In this sense it is similar to the Red Cross and the Salvation Army. Each provides volunteer workers to aid in the disaster operations. These usually begin coming in immediately after impact, but the effects of them on police operation are minimal. The interaction is essentially one way, as civil defense and the other volunteer agencies use the police as a source of information regarding where these volunteers may be used. Police departments generally frown on accepting such volunteers for their own work since they are "untrained amateurs." Generally speaking, the interaction in this context is superficial and limited to seeking information from the police as to where the volunteers can best serve.

The warning phase of a disaster is another source of potential contact between the police and civil defense. As soon as the police are notified, usually by the weather bureau or other similar agency, they may in turn warn civil defense. This contact primarily occurs where civil defense is the organization responsible for initiating a general warning. Many times this responsibility belongs to the police, however, and civil defense is not significantly involved, especially if the warning period is of extremely short duration. A similar conclusion can be reached about police relations with hospitals. Often the only contact made is to warn them of the impending disaster. Any contact thereafter is usually initiated by the hospitals themselves to inform the police of their condition. This relationship is necessitated because often the police seem to fail to consider the possibility that a given hospital might become overloaded.

In summary, civil defense agencies within the local government may be given the formal authority to coordinate disaster operations. Most studies reveal, however, that this authority usually becomes only nominal with their function being reduced to one of an information pool for disaster-relevant organizations other than the police. The effects of these agencies on the police are minimal, and it is the police who exercise the actual control of disaster operations, at least in the early stages. As the police begin to withdraw, however, these agencies may ultimately assume actual control of operations in order to fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the police. Figure 11 illustrates this graphically.

FIGURE 11: Police Authority Versus City Government and/or Civil Defense Authority in Disaster



#### Other Social Control Agencies

The demands on the police in a disaster often exceed their capability. This coupled with the fact that most disaster agents do not respect artificial political boundaries brings other agencies of social control into the situation. These usually are suburban police, sheriff's departments, state police, and the National Guard or other type of military unit. In the case of the civilian units, these groups usually become involved in operations during the warning period and often continue to serve until cleanup is well under way. The state police are usually the first to withdraw followed closely by the sheriff's department. This withdrawal begins as the National Guard moves into the scene. Because of the necessity to mobilize and the time this action

requires, the National Guard typically does not become involved in actual operations until toward the end of the mass assault phase. As a result, their primary tasks become the establishing of cordons and the securing of the damaged areas. While mobilization is occurring, a liaison officer is often attached to police headquarters.

The police generally work well with the National Guard partly because of their paramilitary organization and also because the nature of their training prepares them well for action in a natural disaster. Furthermore, the National Guard seems to always defer to local authority and usually works with police, reporting to them for "sector assignments." In many communities the relations between the police and the Guard are good since many policemen are also members of Guard units, and because interaction between the commanding officers of the police and of the Guard is a frequent occurrence. The police do feel, however, that Guardsmen require some special attention in relation to their duties in the disaster because of the inexperience of many of the troops.

A similar relationship exists between the police and any regular armed forces such as Air Force personnel which may become involved, unless only military police units are sent. The police tend to see the military police as trained men who are familiar with official procedures. Therefore, the local police are not as concerned about the possible negative consequences which might develop through the use of untrained personnel in the field.

Relative to the state police and sheriff's departments, however, a somewhat different relationship may exist. Perhaps the most pertinent factor in understanding the interaction occurring between these groups and local police is the norm of local autonomy. The effects of this norm were alluded to above as coloring the relations between the military and the local police. Local officials are almost always deferred to by outside officials wherever the local police are defined as competent and adequate for the task. In cases where the local police are volunteer units or are a very small organization, they may be pre-empted by larger, better equipped outside units.

This occurred in the Oak Lawn tornado which struck just outside Chicago on April 21, 1967. The Oak Lawn police force consisted of sixty men. In the initial stages the Cook County Sheriff's Department assumed command of the operations. However, as the situation gradually came under control, the sheriff yielded command to the local chief. By way of generalization, then, it might be said that local autonomy generally prevails where the local police are known to be professionally competent and where the force is of sufficient size to handle the demands of the situation.

In this light it should be pointed out that because of the political situation in some areas, friction may develop between the local police and the sheriff's department. This often stems from the fact that local police officers are civil service personnel with a highly professional orientation whereas the sheriff's department personnel are politically elected and/or appointed. Thus the sheriff's office comes to be regarded as incompetent and unprofessional. In addition to this problem, there may also be questions of jurisdiction, if not legally then psychologically due to the strains imposed by the disaster itself.

No examples of such conflict between local and state police have been found by Disaster Research Center field teams. The state police are usually highly trained and very professional in the performance of their duties in a natural disaster. Also, they are more careful to observe the norm of local autonomy and to avoid assuming responsibilities which can be performed by the local police. In the event there is no local police force, however, friction with the sheriff's department is a distinct possibility since there usually are no norms or laws to spell out what should be done.

To summarize, the relationships between local police and other agencies of social control discussed in this section are generally smooth. Information flows two ways between each organization as they often advise and consult with each other. The norm of local autonomy is usually carefully observed. Conflict can develop over jurisdictional problems or questions of competence, but this is rare and is usually confined to the relationships between the local police and the sheriff's department. Generally speaking, the civilian units such as the state police are more active in the first two phases of the disaster while the military units such as the National Guard tend to replace these organizations in the later stages of the operations.

#### Utilities and Construction/Demolition

Contact between the police, utilities companies, and construction companies is minimal; most of the contact occurs in the reorganization phase and the beginning of the cleanup period of operations. By this time search-and-rescue operations are over, and security and traffic control are established facts at the scene. It is only after this has been accomplished that the cleanup operations which are basically performed by these organizations can begin in full force.

In a disaster the police work closely with the various types of public utilities, but not in the same way that they do with the organizations discussed above. The problems dealt with are not those of coordination and the exchange of information so much as of providing assurance to these organizations that they have access to the affected areas and can restore services in them. For example, the police provide entry and clearance of traffic for work crews in an area so that they may go about doing their job. Additionally, the police may request that the telephone companies install more telephones at headquarters and place mobile units in the field to facilitate operations. As these companies are usually quite efficient, use clearly marked equipment, and are involved in rather narrow tasks in relation to the overall disaster effort, their relationship to the police usually consists only of assuring access to areas where they are needed. Their effects on police operations, therefore, are usually minor.

The relationship of the police to construction and demolition crews is essentially the same as that of the utility companies. By the time these organizations and their crews begin full-scale operations, the police have for the most part withdrawn from their role as coordinator of disaster operations. As a study of table 2 and figure 11 would indicate, due to the late entry of these groups into disaster operations, they usually work more closely

with either the city government or civil defense, whichever has assumed the overall control of operations. Often a police officer is assigned to direct traffic or provide other forms of protection, but this is usually done only at the request of the organizations involved. In the early stages of cleanup, there may be somewhat more contact with the police to assure ingress to work areas, but this is usually gained through contact with the city engineering department or some other similar agency of the municipal government.

One exception to the general rule that contact is minimal and occurs late in disaster operations occurs in that both the utility companies and construction companies may be needed immediately after impact if heavy damage is sustained by the police headquarters or to communications facilities. The use of radio, however, lessens the potential impact on communications, and it is more common to find construction crews being assigned to search-and-rescue tasks than directly aiding the police. Generally speaking, therefore, it can be concluded that relations between the police and these types of organizations are minimal and for the most part one way, being initiated usually by the outside organizations. Their effects on the police, while potentially great, are usually not too significant in terms of the overall disaster operation conducted by the police.

#### Conclusions

While operating in a disaster context the police are forced to interact with many more organizations than is normal although the number of these contacts is small compared to the experiences of other disaster-relevant organizations. Some of these contacts pervade the entire disaster operation while others are most relevant only during certain phases. The influence of outside contacts on the total operation of the police is usually minimal. The police tend to work most easily with organizations with which they are familiar, for example the state police, and organizations in which they have a great deal of confidence and trust such as the fire department. Conflict is likely to develop with organizations which are unfamiliar, or are distrusted and not respected for various reasons. Civil defense often falls into this category unless it has a very strong, well run organization. Most of the interaction is essentially one way, consisting of requests for information and aid or permission to enter certain areas. The police most often initiate interaction only with those organizations closely related to them such as other police organizations. For the most part interorganizational operations are smooth and have little truly significant influence on the police. In some cases such as hospitals it could be argued that this influence should be greater, but this is a question which cannot be answered in this study.

FOOTNOTES: Chapter V

1. For a discussion of interorganizational relationships and legitimacy, see Russell R. Dynes, Organized Behavior in Disaster: Analysis and Conceptualization, Disaster Research Center Monograph Series (Columbus: Disaster Research Center, The Ohio State University, 1969), chapter eight.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMPLICATIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL FUNCTIONING IN A NUCLEAR CATASTROPHE

In these concluding pages, the implications of the operations of police departments in natural disasters will be projected into a more inclusive context of events which might occur in a nuclear catastrophe. The basic assumption is that the problems encountered subsequent to a major natural disaster are relatively similar to those which would be faced in a nuclear situation. Where there are differences, they can be visualized primarily as differences of degree. With the exception of the specific form of secondary threat, i.e., radiation, and the probability that a wider geographical area will be involved, a nuclear explosion would not create essentially different problems for community response.

It is assumed here that the delivery of a nuclear agent would come about by some type of military attack. Such attacks typically serve to activate and unify the civilian population in a collective effort to maintain community life, paralleling similar efforts observed after the impact of a disaster agent. The problem-solving units which would respond after nuclear impact would probably be based in the local community. The burden of such a response would be assumed by the traditional emergency organizations, supplemented by others which might have additional relevant resources. In general, then, one might expect the pattern of response which would develop after a nuclear impact would not be radically different from that which is seen subsequent to large-scale disaster impact.

#### Organizational Resources

In mobilizing an emergency response to a potential nuclear attack, the police have important resources to be utilized. In most communities, the police have both physical and personnel resources which are more extensive than any other community agency likely to become involved. The possible exception would be the numerically greater manpower and sometimes greater material resources available through departments of public works.

It is useful here to indicate some of these potential resources. Police departments are always dependent upon extensive communication networks. Such networks are used to coordinate normal activities within the department. These communication networks would become vital in the initial damage assessment subsequent to a nuclear attack. Such an assessment is crucial since it establishes the initial parameters of the problems which a community must face. Routine organizational reports provide the beginnings of an overall assessment of community damage. Initial reports generally are given by police personnel who are familiar with the pre-impact status of the community. The police also would be likely to retain their central position as the recipient of any information from others concerning "unusual" happenings within the community. The mobility of police cars equipped with radio units provides a flexibility and mobility to the process of community reconnaissance which no

other organization can. In addition to the mobility provided by police units in community reconnaissance, such vehicles can also be used for a variety of other emergency tasks.

Aside from the communication and transportation resources which police departments can provide, they also offer extensive personnel resources -- persons who are trained in a variety of emergency skills. These skills, the intimate acquaintance of these personnel with the community, and the previous experience of most of these personnel in other emergency situations provide an important core of emergency workers for a possible nuclear situation.

The police in a nuclear situation are likely to assume a central role in the whole emergency operation which emerges. Initially such a situation is likely to be perceived by community members as being, in large part, a problem of public order and security. The police symbolize order and security in ways that no other community organizations do. Their prenuclear concern with community order would be seen as applicable in the "new" situation. The police also provide, through their uniforms and equipment, the continuity symbolizing the continued existence and viability of the community. In other words, the police are likely to play an even more important role symbolically subsequent to a nuclear attack than they would after other types of emergency. In all emergency situations, however, they do provide the visible symbol of community involvement and authority. The departmental activities are, of course, more than symbolic since there are sufficient reasons to suggest, based on observations in a variety of natural disaster situations, that they would continue to be a relatively effective organization.

#### Relative Effectiveness

Based on observations made in a disaster context, police departments generally operate with a high degree of effectiveness. In most situations, organizational stress is minimal. Effectiveness has to be measured by the ability of police departments to accomplish tasks in the context of extremely high demands. The major reason for their effective functioning is that such organizations are likely to be able to maintain their capabilities and resources in such situations and, in part, are often able to limit the demands made upon them.

The ability of police departments to maintain a high level of capability is related to the following:

1. Police departments usually continue tasks in the emergency period which are similar to their pre-emergency operations.
2. Police departments maintain expectations of becoming involved in emergency activity. Emergencies of all kinds are considered to be a part of organizational responsibility. Such expectations also become part of the expectations of individual members.

3. Police departments normally have "excess" trained personnel since they require several shifts for continuous operation. This means that the operation of the organization is hampered less by the loss of specific persons.

4. Police departments usually have greater interchangeability of personnel than many other types of organizations. This means that loss of personnel would not have negative consequences for the continuous operation of the organization.

5. The organizational expectation of involvement produces a rapid and self-generating mobilization of personnel in emergencies.

6. Police departments usually possess extensive material resources, in the form of transportation and communications equipment. They also have personnel resources which are numerically larger than most other community organizations. These personnel, because of their daily contact with the community, become aware of sources of additional resources which can be utilized in emergencies.

7. Police departments are more likely than other community organizations to have developed plans for emergencies or are able to adapt routine procedures to large-scale emergencies.

8. Since they operate as an ongoing unit in the pre-emergency period, police departments develop experience as a work group. This provides a greater degree of security in the work relations in the emergency period than would characterize most other organizations.

9. Because of their pre-emergency functioning, police departments generally have considerable experience in adapting to and coordinating with other related organizations within the community. Such experience provides a basis for the development of coordinated activities among the various community organizations which do become involved in widespread emergencies.

#### Persistent Problems

While the overall evaluation of the potential effectiveness of police departments is positive, based on their performance in disaster situations, there are also certain persistent problems which would be aggravated in a nuclear context. Some of these problems are intimately related to the previously mentioned organizational strengths of such departments.

1. Because of early involvement, previous emergency experience, and initial focus on incoming damage reports, police departments take on a central role in all emergency activity. There is no reason to suggest it would be different in a nuclear disaster. With their previous experience with emergencies, the police have developed patterns of coordination with those other organizations which are also traditionally involved in emergencies. Networks of communication often exist among police, fire departments, hospitals, etc. Prior knowledge of the activities of these organizations and acquaintance with

their organizational personnel would provide the initial basis for coordinated activity during the emergency period. The involvement of many other community organizations in more widespread community emergencies, however, would introduce new and previously unknown relationships to be coordinated. Too, the creation of new tasks, such as radiation detection, or changes in the legal definitions of responsibility, may involve organizational personnel "unfamiliar" to the police. The police, drawing on their previous emergency experience, will lack familiarity with those involved with these new tasks and new organizational responsibilities. Because of the centrality of police departments to these earlier emergency experiences, one might anticipate that they would find it difficult to incorporate these new relationships into an overall pattern of coordination and that they would resist sharing their authority and responsibility. In other words, the police, based on their prior experience and traditional organizational responsibility, see themselves as the core of all emergency activity. They have developed a division of labor with other community emergency organizations, such as the fire department and hospitals. A more widespread emergency, such as would be produced by a nuclear situation, would necessarily involve a larger number of organizations. Some difficulties would be anticipated in developing patterns of coordination, especially if some of the new organizations intended to assume a major role in this coordination.

2. The police department has a somewhat limited capacity to expand to meet increased demands. It has been suggested that the police department is somewhat reluctant to accept volunteers. Because of the previous experience of working together as a unit and because of "professional" identification, police departments develop a type of esprit de corps and cohesiveness. While this has its positive aspects perhaps, in increasing the effectiveness of the work unit, this does seem to limit the ability of the organization to add personnel to meet increased demands. Assistance for police tasks in disaster situations is often sought from various regular and reserve military units. In a nuclear situation, these military sources of assistance would be problematic and added help might have to be sought among civilian volunteers, a source which police departments have found difficulty incorporating in their organizational structure.

3. Much of police departmental activity is predicated upon the availability of an operative communication network. Major departments develop elaborate communications facilities which often include emergency sources of power, etc. Emergency planning within such organizations generally centers on alternative procedures and back-up support. With the possibility of vast blast-affected areas subsequent to a nuclear attack, it is likely that the central communication facilities of many police departments will be completely destroyed. Much current emergency planning does not entertain the possible consequences of a community emergency which also destroyed the communication facilities of the operating organization. Such "double" disasters are a much more realistic possibility subsequent to a nuclear attack and consequently, greater attention should be given in planning to the development of substitute communication facilities. One alternative would seem to point toward the development of mobile communications centers which have the capacity (and the location) to survive nuclear attack and also be adequate to handle demands within the range of performance required of the permanent installation.

4. One of the most persistent problems in any emergency situation is the development of knowledge concerning the extent of impact and damage. The police, because of their communication facilities and their usual organizational deployment, are in the best position to collate information as it becomes available. Their ability, however, tends to be mitigated by two factors. The inputs from the environment which the police department receives are seen primarily in their implications for the functioning of their own organization -- tasks, deployment, etc. Second, such knowledge, as it is accumulated, is seldom shared with other involved organizations. In spite of the fact that the knowledge of "what has happened" is seen primarily in the context of organizational responsibility, the police department does develop a greater amount of information and in fact a more comprehensive view than do other organizations. The importance of this rests in the following: most communities have not developed any organization which has the responsibility (and the facilities) for the collection of information about the effect of impact. The police department probably collects, in the course of its early involvement, the most accurate initial picture of impact. This tends to be treated as a departmental resource and not a community necessity. Whether the collection of more inclusive and shared information should be a departmental task is not the issue here. The point to be made is that police departments become the focal points of information critical to the operation of not only their own organization but all others. Based upon experience in natural disaster, police departments have not developed ways of storing such information or transferring it to other organizations needing it.

5. The police department will also continue to have problems with the "unnecessary" deployment of men and materials during the initial stages of the emergency period. The uncertainty which would be produced subsequent to nuclear attack coupled with the urgency to act creates the tendency to react without adequate information as to actual need. These early decisions are often based upon "images" which organizational officials have of what is expected to happen. Based on disaster behavior, police officials are much more likely to initially see problems in terms of their security implications. To anticipate that widespread looting will take place results in the allocation of police personnel to security tasks which are only minimally necessary based on the behavior which follows. On the other hand, police measures necessary to overcome problems of convergence are usually developed after the situation emerges, complicated by earlier inattention. Based on this common occurrence in disaster, it is reasonable to expect that the police department would react to a nuclear situation in terms of images of what they expect might happen. One can infer that such images would also contain a strong control element. That is, many popular and official images imply that irrational actions, panic, and withdrawal can be anticipated as common, if not widespread, forms of postnuclear behavior. Many of these images have become a part of the organizational expectations for action in "controlling" the behavior of survivors. These expectations of irrational behavior will probably lead to heightened concern with establishing "security" measures and consequently the allocation of departmental resources to this end. As a result, the more critical problem to be faced early in the emergency period, the collection and compilation of knowledge about the consequences of the event, is likely to be slighted.

Most of the problems mentioned above are perhaps not inherent in police departments. Most of them relate to problems which emerge in situations of widespread impact and the resultant difficulties of coordinating the involvement of a variety of different community organizations. Police departments are usually at the core and often the focus of coordinative effort with the community. Problems of coordination, however, would be accentuated in the wide impact which could be anticipated subsequent to a nuclear catastrophe.

In spite of the problems mentioned above, the overall conclusion, based on observations of police departments in disaster situations, is that they function effectively. Since they are often at the center of the pattern of community activity which emerges to cope with emergency problems, such departments do provide the solid base necessary for the many tasks which have to be accomplished. The police complete the tasks within their organizational domain with a high degree of efficiency since they possess established procedures, sufficient personnel, and accessible resources. Their performance underscores the potential payoff which results from continuous organizational planning, as well as the importance of training personnel in reacting to emergency situations.

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